

832 hut and tie the bag round his neck. What remains of the *timhorola*
 733 will be used to smear the hut. Then all the girls will love him ;
 783 or in the case of a girl, she will soon be asked in marriage.
 584

This ceremony is a characteristic *hondlola*, the same which is performed on the weaning day (see page 59) and after any serious disease ; it is a rite of removal of impurity. (Notice the termination *ola, ula, ulula* in these verbs ; it means generally to undo, to take away).

832 If the love charms do not obtain the desired result, the angry
 754 boy will perhaps try to avenge himself. He will take a fowl, or
 262 perhaps only an egg, treat it with special drugs and give it to the girl in order to bewitch her. This kind of witchcraft is called *ku dambikela*. (See the Chapter on Witchcraft, Part VI). The girl will give birth not to a child, but to an animal, a pigeon, or a snake. Or her genitalia will be changed and take the appearance of the male organ. This is one of the causes why eggs and fowls are taboo for girls.

Let us now hear from Tobane the description of the marriage rites amongst the Mpfumo clan. We shall afterwards see how the customs differ in other Ronga and Thonga clans.

II. Marriage ceremonies of the Mpfumo clan.

1) THE BETROTHAL (Buta).

584 When a young man has made up his mind to get married, and when he is in possession of the necessary *lobola* (1) cattle, he starts, one fine day, with two or three of his friends to look for a wife in the villages. He puts on his most brilliant ornaments and his most precious skins. Here they are, arriving in the village

583 1) *Ku lobola* means to buy in marriage. *Ku lobola* (a factitive derivative of the verb) is said of a father who claims a sum of money from his daughter's suitor. *Lobola* or *ndjibola* or *bukosi* (wealth) is the sum paid, the oxen, the bees, or the pounds sterling. We shall use these words, which are employed in Thonga as well as in Zulu and ought to be adopted as technical ethnographic terms. I use the verb for the act of paying and the noun for the sum itself.

888 In time of war, old people die in great numbers. During moments of panic, they are hidden in the wood, in the palm-tree swamps, while all the able-bodied population run away. They are killed by the enemy, who spares no one (it is the law of war), or they die in their hiding-places of misery and hunger!

As may be seen, the eve of life is very sad for the poor Thonga. There are however children who, to the end, show much devotion to their parents. The most to be pitied are those who fall to the charge of remote nephews or cousins. They can only repeat in a broken voice the sad refrain: "Ba hi shanisa!" — "They treat us very badly!"

G. DEATH

1. *The last days.*

763 Manyibane, the headman of a big village near Rikatla, is
513 dangerously ill. The men of his kraal, his friends, have come
834 to inquire about the illness (kamba shinyonga) and have learned
761 that it is serious. They issue this order to all the inhabitants:
 "Tlulan psilawen!" — "Keep each of you in his sleeping place,
 (viz. the men to the right of the hut, the women to the left) and
 have no more relations. It is taboo! The man would die!"
 Should visitors come, they are not allowed to enter the village.
 They must have kept "pure" for two days at least. Two sticks
 are planted on either side of the door of the hut, and a third is
 put over them so as to close the entrance. "It is the way black
 people have of making their proclamation," says Mboza.
 "Everybody will know that a dying man is there and nobody will
 come in." Should another man of the village have had relations
 with the same woman as the patient, he is doubly prohibited from
 seeing him, because the patient would break out into perspiration
 and die immediately. This is the great law of *matlulana*, as we
 shall see.

754 Of course the *nanga* (doctor) has been called already. He

754 has tried his best. The bone-thrower also! He has perhaps discovered that the disease was due to a wizard. He has found him out by his art. The suspected one is called and solemnly ordered to heal the patient. He is shut up in the hut with him, and he must recall his deadly spells and restore the man to health. But this has not succeeded, any more than the doctor's drugs!

The dying man calls together all his relations, and utters his last wishes before them: "Somebody has not come; go and fetch him" he says. When they are all present, he says to them: "All right, my brethren, my children. I wanted to see you before dying. I wanted you, especially so and so, who has been so good to me. The others hated me; you always showed me love. Henceforth I entrust to you the care of my people." He will probably designate his successor, who is to be the great one (nkulukumba), and recommend the others to obey him.

763 Then he reminds them of his debts, those he owes and those which are owing to him. "So and so has lobola our daughter and has not paid all the oxen..." He reveals to them also the place where he has buried some treasure. "Go to such a place, in such a hut, and you will find it." He does not say a word about his wives and about their future, as such questions will be settled according to the laws relating to widows, which are well known.

When the breathing becomes shorter, those who watch over him begin to *bend his limbs* (ku khondla piro (Ro.); ku putja (Dj.).) This is a very old custom, and is deemed so important that the operation begins before death, lest the rigidity of the body should prevent its being accomplished. When the bending of the limbs had been too long delayed, it has sometimes been necessary to break them. To avoid this disagreeable possibility, one may see those attending to the dying man take his hands gently and bring them close up to his chin, and fold his legs against his body. When asked why they do so, they will say: "It is the law. This is the way of caring for the dead (bekisa)." Or: "It is in order to have smaller graves to dig..." But I do not think this utilitarian reason to be the true one. Amongst the Ba-Ronga, where graves are dug in the soft sand, there would not be the least difficulty in making a larger hole.

581 says: "Nsati wa mabele u nga nabele loko u nge na bukosi."
 832 — "Do not covet a woman with large breasts if you have no money..." This does not mean that she will cost more, but her father, knowing that she will not want for suitors, will not consent to let her go unless the full lobolo is paid at once. On the other hand a girl with an elongated face is admired more than one who is too broad-faced. Of the first they say: "She is pretty, she resembles an antelope" (a kota mhala); of the second: "She is 832 chubby-cheeked, she is like a sow." A light complexion is preferred to a very dark one, because the white or yellow races are regarded 186 as superior, and a Native laying claim to any European or Asiatic 732 blood is proud of it. Parents, who also have their say in the 581 question of marriage, insist on two other points: the working 824 capacity of the girl, and the absence of any witchcraft blot in the family. Should her mother have been convicted of being a witch, 581 the girl will be feared. However, every girl finds a husband in the 583 land where polygamy flourishes. If he be slow in coming, she will apply to her doctor, who will prepare the *love charms*, which will make her "appear," so that she will be noticed by the boys (See page 100). If even that does not succeed, she has other means at her disposal and may go herself to make proposals to a man (wopsana). He is seduced by her, and constitutes himself a thief who has *tlhuba*, viz. "taken in marriage by abduction" (See page 119). The parents will claim the lobolo and he must pay it. Marriage and childbearing remain the only career to which a Thonga woman can look forward. Hence a number of special feminine taboos which are very curious.

2) SPECIAL FEMININE TABOOS.

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 845 Some of them concern girls *before childbearing* and cease after
 784 parturition. In the Tembe and Maputju clans, girls must not eat
 562 pork, because pigs root nervously with their noses; the future child
 825 would also move its head from one side to the other, when on the verge of birth, and this would make delivery difficult. Other

841 Let us consider first how conjugal relations are regulated in normal circumstances.

Every month during her "tihweti" the woman is taboo and no intercourse is allowed. This is one of the severest taboos. Should a husband infringe this law, his health would fail, and, should he be called to go to war, "his knees would shake," he would tremble and be unable to fight (1). As regards the woman, these days constitute a real marginal period during which she is absolutely secluded from her husband. She must keep to the left half of the hut and not trespass across the centre line. If she wants snuff, she is not allowed to go to her husband in the part in which he lies; she must send a child to fetch the tobacco she wants! During these days she sleeps on a special mat and puts on special clothes, the old ones which she brought with her for this purpose on the day she first came to the conjugal dwelling. When cooking, she must not touch the mealie meal with her hands, but with a spoon. A rich man who has plenty of spouses, and therefore plenty of food, will not touch the pot of the tabooed wife! At the end of the period, she smears the floor of the hut and puts on her ordinary clothing. (Annotatio 12). This is evidently the aggregation rite by which the woman returns to everyday life.

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754 Normal relations continue during the first year of married life. Should the wife become pregnant, they are not suspended. It would even seem that they are rather recommended, as is shown by the following story: A young man once complained to me that he had been bewitched by his maternal aunt. The result of the spell she had cast over him was that he was no longer able to have sexual intercourse with his wife; and he was very angry, as he asserted that the aim of his aunt, in doing this, had been to prevent the successful issue of the pregnancy. She wanted

(1) The woman during her tihweti is also taboo for other persons. I heard of the case of a child who suffered from a hernia in the scrotum five days after birth. People said that it was the fault of certain women who had taken it in their arms during menstruation.

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754 to hinder the child from growing and to put in its place, by means of her enchantments, a snake, a hare, a quail or an antelope!

834 After the birth, owing to possible contamination by the lochia, sexual intercourse is prohibited till the rite of tying the cotton string (p. 56) has taken place. It is then allowed, but conception must be avoided till weaning, when relations are resumed in the normal way, and this goes on till the time when the woman is no longer able to bring forth children. I know of no special rules in connection with the menopause.

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831 But, amongst Bantus, sexual relations are not an individual affair, as amongst nations more advanced in evolution. There is a mysterious relation between them and the collective life of the community. Hence the fact that, on certain given occasions, they are recommended, even ordered, or prohibited.

1) Cases of recommendation.

833 Sexual relations must take place on two principal occasions: when the inmates of a village abandon it and go elsewhere to found a new one, and when the widows perform the painful rite of "lahla khombo" (to cast away misfortune). We shall see, when studying these customs, that sexual relations have here a twofold signification: 1) they "consolidate" the little community in its new abode, viz. they strengthen its structure by confirming the authority of its chief; 2) they provide the principal means of getting rid of all contamination, especially of the defilement connected with death. (Annotatio 13.)¹

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2) Cases of prohibition.

834 Married people are not considered as being in a state of defilement, as mourners are, for example. Yet this class of persons, called "ba-ku-khila," constitute a danger for those members of the community who are in a weak state of health. They must not come in contact with the circumcised, because in that case their wounds would not heal properly.

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1 [See pp. 518-519 in those categories or in 46--Analyst]

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888 she has contracted such an intimate union with Mother Earth that she cannot conceive existence away from her gardens, and she crawls to them with her hoe, by a kind of instinct, till she dies.

764 The death of the woman is accompanied by the same rites as the death of a man. I must mention, however, the custom of *mahloko*, which takes place when a woman dies while still in her prime. *Mahloko* comes from *nhloko*, head. The explanation of this technical word is this: the parents of the woman say: "Our head (viz. a person belonging to us) has died; let us go to mourn her."

587 Let us first see how this mourning takes place in the *Ronga* clans.

578 If the two families were very friendly, the parents of the deceased will probably bring with them a little girl, saying: "This is our little green meat (*mbuti*), our little orange (rather *sala*, fruit of the *nsala* tree)." They offer her to the husband to take the place of the deceased wife, and a new contract will be made. The widower will then at once pay a first part of the *lobolo*, £ 5 for instance, and, in the course of time, he will marry his sister-in-law. But generally the visitors are angry, and the *mahloko* ceremony is very unpleasant. It may be that the deceased wife had not been entirely paid for. In that case her parents will come at the end of the mourning to "claim the herd" (*ramela ntihambi*).

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754 But though there may be no difficult *lobola* question in the way, uneasiness is felt, because the brothers of the deceased cannot help thinking that their sister has been killed by witchcraft. It was not yet time for her to die; so she must have been bewitched by the husband's family, probably by her co-wives, who were jealous of her. When the Great Mourning took place, they hardly came to the mortuary village. One or two went to see their "head," and mourned her in their own kraal. To day, the day of *mahloko*, they assemble, and throw bones in order to know who will have to speak, who will receive the *mahloko* money, whether the money has been bewitched? The whole company starts for the mortuary village, driving a goat before them. They sit down outside in the bush with dark looks; there is no longer any hut to receive them... They have been noticed by the

764 inhabitants of the kraal. One of them, the saluter (*mulosi*), goes
 604 to meet them and offers them a shilling. They keep silence.
 548 He tells them the news of the village. They do not answer.
 754 He leaves them and comes a second time with a fresh present.
 Then they consent to tell the news of their home, but they do not
 enter the village. The same man returns to them a third time
 with £ 1; they refuse to accept it. He adds 10/. (£ 1.10 is
 considered the normal sum to be paid as a kind of fine by the
 widower to the parents of the deceased.) They refuse again: this
 is an insult! Happily the *ntukulu* is there; he will act as mediator
 between the two families. The visitors summoned him on their
 arrival and he has been sitting with them the whole time; is he
 not the son of their sister? But before he went to them, his
 father has given him his instructions: "Tell them that I have not
 eaten your mother." The *ntukulu*, as we shall see, is very free
 with his maternal uncles. He has the right of teasing them, even
 insulting them. Seeing that they do not accept the money, he
 stands and gives vent to his grief, throws sand at them, tries to
 drive them away, weeps. "No! Father has not killed mother!
 He is not a wizard! She died a natural death!" They see his
 tears, and then consent to enter the village.

764 In front of the mortuary hut, all the belongings of the deceased
 768 wife have been piled up, together with the straw crown of the hut:
 545 her pots, plates, baskets, spoons, mortars, etc. The brothers
 782 break everything. Should there be any new implements amongst
 [578] them, they will perhaps give them to their nieces. Then they
 lift up the roof of the hut and throw it into the bush. They pick
 all the plaster from the walls and throw it away where they threw
 the roof. The sacrifice is then accomplished amidst the ruins of
 the destroyed hut. Whilst it is being prepared, the women of
 both families insult each other. The female relatives of the
 deceased say to the women of the village: "You have killed her
 because she was a splinter in your eyes" (*shilabi*). The others
 answer: "Have you seen us kill her? Perhaps people do not
 die with you?" The *bukwele*, the special jealousy which almost
 always exists between co-wives, explains how it is possible for
 them to address such amenities to each other. But the victim is

361 he or she has finished the meal, will have eaten a little of all
596 that has been cooked on all the fires. It is impossible to
264 imagine a more perfect communism than this as regards food!
476 I myself witnessed this custom of the evening meal in Spoon
 Libombo's village in Rikatla. Amongst the inhabitants of the
 kraal there were two blind male adults, the wife of one of them
 being half blind herself; the wife of the other was an old woman
 who could hardly till a few square yards of mealies and ground-
 nuts, and keep the birds and the hens away from them. Spoon's
 wife and the wife of another man of the village alone were healthy
 and able to work normally. So the whole burden rested on their
 shoulders, as the share the other women could take in the feeding
 of the men was necessarily small. However I never heard Spoon
 grumble; being the headman, he made it a point of honour that
 all the people dwelling with him should have enough to eat.
 Everybody who has lived with South African Natives has admired
 their wonderful readiness to share any food they may have with
 those present. Even children are much superior in this respect
 to White children. I attribute this virtue to the community of
 food which reigns in the Bantu village, and which is certainly
 one of the most attractive features of Kafir socialism. Village life
 has not taught the Thongas merely bad habits.

B. MOVING A VILLAGE AND FOUNDING A NEW ONE.

621 Large kraals similar to the one shown in our illustration
754 were more numerous in former times than now. It is rare to
596 meet with such a number of huts and so many people under
 one headman. Why? Because, say my informants, the
 superstition of witchcraft has considerably increased in later
 times. Suppose the wife of one of the younger brothers should
 die; the divinary bones reveal that this death is due to a witch;
 [787] they go so far as to designate one of the wives of the headman
 as guilty. No common life is any longer possible. The
 widower will move elsewhere and build a fence around his

621 own huts to protect them against would-be-witches. In this way
 754 many villages are broken up by fear of witchcraft. Generally
 596 speaking the Thonga village cannot long remain of any considerable size; it tends to fall to pieces.

But there are other causes which may destroy the village and the idyllic life of the small community. The death of the headman, and lightning striking the village, are the two main causes which may bring about this event.

765 Death of the headman. There is a mystic tie between this man
 596 and the social organism which is under him. Should he die, the village dies also... It is not abandoned at once. The whole
 621 year of mourning will elapse before the moving. But as soon
 787 as the widows and property have been distributed, the successor of the deceased will go and found his own village and the old one will remain a ruin (rumbi). Should any one else die, his hut will merely be thrown into the bush and the village will not be abandoned. But should these deaths increase, then the divinator bones may order the place to be deserted, as it is defiled and dangerous.

821 If lightning strikes the hubo, it is a very bad omen. The
 756 medicine man who has the power to "treat the place struck by lightning" is called in. Should he be able to exhume from the
 787 ground the mysterious bird which causes lightning, or at least the
 621 coagulated urine which it has deposited, and which is called Heaven (See Part VI), the people are allowed to stay. But if he does not discover it deep down in the soil, the village must move, as the presence of the mysterious power of Heaven inside the circle of huts would bring disaster. This is a taboo.

621 Another cause of moving is the exhaustion of the gardens. When
 787 the fields are "tired" (karala) and do not produce sufficient food for the inhabitants, they leave the place and look for pastures new.
 596 In that case the bones will be consulted. Sometimes, even, the village may be transported elsewhere for the sole reason that the people are tired of the place and want to change. If the bones confirm their wishes, they will move.

621 The founding of a new village is the occasion of most interesting
 596 and characteristic rites, which afford us a new insight into the

682 procedure. They are in advance of many tribes. The same
627 cannot be asserted when dealing with witchcraft!

754 Witchcraft (Buloyi). To the Thonga mind this is one of the
683 greatest crimes which a man can commit. It is equivalent to
787 assassination, even worse than murder, as a dim idea of anthro-
694 pophagy is added to the simple charge of killing. A wizard
kills human beings to eat their flesh. We shall study the
conceptions of *buloyi* later on (Part VI) from a psychological point
of view. Here it is mentioned only in as far as it gives rise
to judicial cases. This particular crime being committed in great
secrecy during the night, and in most instances even unconsciously,
the Bantu tribunal uses two or three magical methods for discov-
ering it. These *methods of inquiry*, which civilised nations have
long ago abandoned, are:

1) *Divination by casting lots*. The objects used in our tribe
for this purpose are the magic bones, the astragalus of goats,
antelopes, etc. and shells, which I intend to study in a special
chapter. When they have designated (*ku ba*, to beat) the wizard
or witch (*noyi*) who has killed such and such a person, they are
consulted a second time. If they confirm their verdict, the
relatives of the deceased go to the chief and lodge their complaint.
The accusation becomes official and is now in the hands of the
tribunal.

2) The chief sends the plaintiff and accused to the magician
who proceeds to the *divination by questioning* them and working
himself up into an ecstatic condition (*vumisa*).

683 3) Should the accused be again designated and should he
695 deny his crime, he may request to be submitted to the *ordeal*,
824 viz. the trial by the solaneous plant called *mondjo*. If the drug
787 intoxicates him, his guilt is confirmed for the third time and the
754 tribunal will condemn him. The punishment for *buloyi* is death,
either by hanging, or by empaling, or by drowning in the river, if
the wizard was in the habit of perpetrating his murders by sending
crocodiles to kill his victims.

[177] Nowadays Native chiefs dare not put to death suspected witches.
[681] Since the Be-Ronga have been under the jurisdiction of the Whites,
the death penalty has been abolished. On the other hand, under

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754 Gungunyana, executions were of frequent occurrence. When the chief had condemned a man to death, he merely made a sign to one of his executioners, who followed the unfortunate individual, as he went away into the bush, possibly quite unconscious of the fate awaiting him, and dealt him a heavy blow from behind with either club or assegai, killing him on the spot. Chiefs now only expel wizards or witches from the country, accompanying them to the boundary, or impose a high fine on them, keeping half of the amount. However there are still individuals who avenge themselves for the death of a relative on the suspected murderer by killing him. Such cases are not infrequently brought before the Courts of Pretoria and Johannesburg.

177 What is the duty of the civilised tribunal in such instances? White
681 judges generally condemn to death a man who has killed a "noyi".
627 I know of cases in which even an induna who had hanged a "noyi,"
683 duly condemned by the Native Court, was himself considered a criminal
754 and condemned as such. This happened to our friend Mankhela, one of the pillars of the Nkuna tribe, the General of the army... He only escaped death owing to petitions sent to the Boer Authorities by both Blacks and Whites. This happened, I think, in 1888. Are European judges right in pronouncing the capital punishment in such cases? This is questionable. It is certainly erroneous to assimilate Mankhela's act which, in his own eyes, is an act of justice, to an ordinary murder, and to punish him as an assassin. He did what he thought to be right according to his knowledge. The husband of a bewitched woman who kills the murderer of his wife is more blamable, because his act is not sanctioned by the authority of a regular Court. However neither one nor the other deserves death.

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754 I fully recognise that such acts of the Native tribunals must be stopped. A chief who accepts accusations of witchcraft ought to be punished, especially if it has been duly explained to him that a White Government does not allow any such case to be judged in the country. In the course of time Natives will understand this and the witchcraft superstition will dwindle away. But let us be patient with them, remembering that our forefathers of 300 years ago did exactly the same thing and burnt hundreds of suspected witches after having subjected them to horrible tortures.

In an essay on the subject published in the SAAAS Report of

683 1906, I ventured to suggest certain means of checking the buloyi
 754 superstition. The Department of Native Affairs might give the following directions to its subordinates, the Native chiefs:

- 1) The crime of buloyi is not recognised under penal law.
- 2) The Native chiefs are prohibited from trying any buloyi case.
- 3) The plaintiff must be reprimanded as disturbing the peace of the country.

4) The witch doctor or mungoma (magician), who pretends to have smelt out a wizard, must be fined as using his authority to deceive people and foster hatred amongst them.

5) No evidence based on the use of divinatory bones must be accepted.

These rules, if strictly enforced and combined with Christian teaching and the progress of civilisation, will in the course of time put an end to the scourge of witchcraft.

683 *Insults.* Ku rukana or ruketela, to hurl insults at each
 695 other's head, is very frequent amongst Thongas and does not
 578 lead to any judicial case, if not accompanied by assault and
 bruises (1). There are however insulting deeds which are considered as crimes. To take human blood, or spittle, or excrement with a stick and to push it into the mouth of a child, for instance, is considered a very serious insult which must be judged before the Court. A man who committed such an offence would have to pay a fine amounting to a whole lobola. I heard of a woman, who gave a child a butterfly to eat. The parents of the little one were very angry. She denied having done such a thing. They said to her: "Confess your sin and pay a fine of 5/—." She refused and offered to undergo the ordeal, viz., to drink the mondjo philtre. "If you insist" said they, "you will have to pay £ 10." However she persisted and became intoxicated; this was a proof of her guilt. She was fined to the amount of £ 40, £ 20 for the child and £ 20 for the chief!

683 To point at any one with the index finger is also a grave insult
 201 which may have judicial consequences, because this action is
 754 brought into close relation with buloyi.

683 (1) The most common insult which women can cast in each other's teeth is
 578 *ndibhilewaku* (Ro) or *nyathilewaku* (Nkama) which means: the genitals of your mother.
 695 A scuffle with blows is sure to arise when that word has been pronounced. It is also used when taking an oath. Men swear by the name of their chief.

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789 and Part VI). — To protect and to prolong his life, diviners sometimes call together the whole clan in order to discover and eventually arrest those who might bewitch and kill the chief. This gathering is called *nyinwa* (See Part VI). — As for rain making, it is in the hands of the proper rain doctors (*Nkuna*) or is done by the ceremonies of *mbelele* (Part VI). — He is not held responsible for public calamities. — If his bodily or mental powers fail, the *tinduna* discuss matters in his stead and he is not deposed.

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769 Chiefs are never worshipped during life time. After death, they are deified for their own family, who worship them, but not for their subjects. — They are not supposed to turn into wild beasts after their death. — The custom of appointing mock kings does not exist. Only on the death of a chief can one of his relatives be nominated to take his place, and watch over his property until the adjudication of the inheritance.

244 being of every day use in the Thonga culinary art, in which it provides the fatty principles. This curious Papillonacea, after having blossomed, elongates the peduncle of the flower, which enters the ground, and the seed grows in the soil, well protected against the rays of the sun. Its taste is delicious, either prepared as a sauce to season mealie flour, or roasted. When there are no nuts inside the shells, which often happens, Thongas call the empty shells *maboobo*. They say: "The ground nuts have refused" — "Ma yalile marumane." But this is a euphemism. They mean that the *baloyi*, the wizards, have refused to let them grow or, rather, have stolen them from their shells during the night (See Part VI).

244 b) Another Leguminosa frequently cultivated is the *nyume*
 824 (yi-tin (Ro.), *ndlowu*, yi-tin, (Dj.), the *Kafir pea*. This also grows in the earth, like the ground nut. It is much coarser than the European pea, but is twice or three times as large and very nourishing. This vegetable is subject to very curious taboos amongst the Rongas. Whilst all other seeds are sown in one and the same garden, this must be planted in a separate patch, and the tinyume field must be shut off from the others by a fence of thorns. Men [753] are allowed to plant them, but, as soon as they have grown a little, only women can enter the field. Should a man imprudently do so, he would transgress a severe taboo. The danger is twofold: firstly the man himself would be punished; he would get a hydrocele. But the owners of the field would also suffer: the crops would fail. They would reproach the transgressor with these words: "You have taken away (*hungula*) the strength of our peas!" In order to prevent any such mischance, the husband of the woman who owns the field goes and treats (*daha*) it in the following manner: he throws his *assagay* across the field, in the direction of the four cardinal points. Then the danger is removed and men can pass through the plot. It might be supposed that this taboo was of the same kind as that which rested on bananas, for instance, when they were still new in the country and feared on that account. But it would not seem that the *Kafir pea* is a recent innovation in Thonga agriculture. It has been known for a long time. Another taboo in connection with *Kafir peas* is this:

- 343 or in small storehouses hung to the branches of trees (mfunge). When the harvest has been plentiful and all the storehouses have been filled, then begins the happy time of winter, of beer drinking, *bunanga* playing, (I. p. 431) paying visits, etc.

II. Agricultural taboos.

- 241 The first category of agricultural taboos are those previously
784 mentioned, which spring from the idea of *hierarchy*: the prohibition to sow pumpkin seeds before the elder members of the family, the prohibition to enjoy the first-fruits (Kafir corn, bukanye, etc.) before the gods, the chief, the headman, and the elder brothers have *luma* (I. p. 394). Others belong to the *special feminine taboos*, (girls not allowed to walk amongst the pumpkins, to pluck their fruit or to pick their leaves without certain precautions, I. p. 184). Another category is that of *shimusi*. Certain days are proclaimed by the chief, or fixed by custom, as sabbath days, on which no one is allowed to till the soil. In Nwamba, when there has been a little rain, it is taboo for the people of the clan to work in the fields; they must remain at home. Amongst the Nkunas the day on which the new moon appears is also *shimusi*. The moon must be left to "become firm" (*tiyela, hola*); to cut roots while it is still "soft" is taboo: it would cause strong winds and hail. Complete rest is also customary in Khosen the day following the birth of twins. (See Part VI. Chap. II). Some other taboos are due to the fear of *wizards*: it is forbidden to whistle in the fields after having sown or until the mealies are grown. This would call the "*baloyi*" and endanger the harvest.
- 241 It is a taboo for a woman to remain in a standing position when
784 she borrows a living ember (*woka*) from people cooking their food in their gardens; she must sit down when she takes the ember. Should she break this law, it would cause the mealies of the owners of that garden to be burnt (*psha*); the women has "crossed their gardens" (*tjemakanya*). If however she does this, they

(wombela) to encourage him. Judging that they did not do this 533
with sufficient vigour, he scooped up a handful of sand and 538
threatened to throw it into their eyes. They clapped with
renewed ardour. One of them, the tall, light-coloured one who
had sung the obscene songs referred to I. p. 159, came, and
with a peculiar smile wrapped a yellow piece of cloth round his
loins. He sang other songs, again trampling furiously on the
ground, until the sacrificers had finished their work; then he
was made to stop, and the prayer to Manyibane began.

This performance was indeed, wonderful, and its interest was
in no wise inferior to the funeral ceremonies themselves. It is
a typical example of Thonga poetry, where three elements are
generally present: the music, the dance and the words, which
are more or less poetical.

This Manyisa bard is by no means a unique specimen. I
remember having heard, many years ago, a poet of exactly the
same type, from Bilene, who visited the Ronga clans, singing
everywhere and asking for old rags as his reward. There are
professional poets who earn their living by their art. There are
also a number of occasional poets, who compose new songs and
perform them in their own villages, not aspiring to a world-wide
fame. If their tunes are pleasing, they are spoken of by
others, and so become known throughout the land, on the strength
of their own merit. In this way songs become popular and
a great number of them are constantly sung at beer-parties,
after harvest, at the feasts, some gradually falling into oblivion
and being replaced by new ones each season (1).

In this chapter I shall not treat of the musical character of the

(1) I met later a blind minstrel, Mungumana, who earned his living in the neigh-
bourhood of Lourenço Marques by giving concerts in the yard of an important Native
woman named Nwalanga, at which a number of boys from Inhambane and Chopiland
used to stop before leaving for Johannesburg. He accompanied their dances with his
timbila (xylophone) and was paid 4,000 reis per month. He told me his story.
When quite young he showed a quite unusual gift for music and dancing. He went
everywhere where a feast was taking place and boys were trying to outdo each other
in dancing and singing, and was always proclaimed first. A woman impressed by his
wonderful art, asked him to marry her, but he declined on the plea that he was still
too young. Once as he was passing along a field where this woman was at work, she
said to him: "If you do not marry me, you shall not live." Frightened by this

533 songs; that will be considered in the next chapter, in which I
 538 intend to publish the forty-one tunes of my collection. Here I shall
 only consider them as literary products, and in trying to classify
 them, I have noticed that, though most of them cannot be said to
 be very elaborate compositions, they pertain to many different
 styles, lyric, elegiac, epic, dramatic, etc. and, in addition, there
 are those which are sung while at work, as well as the incantations
 to animals and spirits. I will give some examples of each of
 these categories.

II. Lyric poetry.

533 Thongas, like most human beings, have felt the need of chanting
 539 their joys and sorrows, joining words to music in order the better
 to express their feelings. These feelings are not as a rule very
 deep, and their lyrics are rather play than a painful cry of the
 heart. Here for instance is *the complaint of the childless woman*,
 who longs ardently for a baby. She has been to other people and
 asked them to lend her one. But they have refused and only
 consented to lend her a mortar and a plate. She then sings to a
 charming melody (Tune 7).

A ba bulaki Swana! — Ba boleka tshuri ni akambana!
 Ngi ndji mangata! — Ngi ndji shimungwe! — Ngi n'ta ku utla!
 They won't lend me a baby! — They lend me but a mortar and a plate!
 Were I an eagle! — Were I a bird of prey! — I would carry thee away!

The thousands of young Thongas who go to the mines of
Johannesburg, to extract the precious auriferous quartz, seem to be
 quite contented with their fate. They, however, chant their

533 threat he find to another country, but soon one of his eyes began to swell. His elder
 brother told him: "You have been bewitched by that woman," and his paternal aunt
 754 tried to heal him. She covered him with a piece of cloth, and made him expose his
 eye to the steam of a certain drug boiled in a pot below. She claimed to have
 succeeded, having found an ox-tail hair at the bottom of the pot when she poured out the
 water. This was however a lie. The eye complaint became worse, till he entirely
 lost his sight. He then devoted his life to music, and composed many songs to accom-
 pany the dances of the magayisa (boys going to work.) These songs became popular;
 if a boy wished for one of them, his favourite, to be executed, he would willingly pay
 200 reis! — Mungomana is the only Thonga I heard of who used music in his reli-
 gious rites. I shall give the words of his canticle in Part VI.

identical with their image. This notion seems to be at the root of 774
the fear they show of being photographed, as we shall see directly.

We see therefore that Thongas are not at all dogmatic on this subject. The soul is at the same time the breath, viz., something of the nature of the wind, the shadow, the image, the external likeness, or fashion of man as opposed to his flesh.

Whatever may be the original notion, they consider the human being as double and capable of unsheathing itself on certain occasions ; their conception on this point may throw more light on their ideas concerning the nature of the soul.

Some believe that the *unsheathing* always takes place during the night and that the soul comes back when its owner awakes ; this is, par excellence, the case in regard to witches, who unsheath by their magical power and bewitch people during the night, as we shall see. But, though the belief is not universal, some think that all souls go away (or die) during sleep. I heard a boy earnestly praying one evening that his soul might come back to him next morning ! This is a kind of physiological normal unsheathing which is attended with no bad results. But a pathological unsheathing also exists, and is very dangerous. It may be caused by the photograph of a man being taken. Ignorant Natives [609] instinctively object to being photographed. They say : "These White people want to steal us (*pepula*) and take us with them, far away into lands which we do not know, and we shall remain only incomplete beings." When shown the magic lantern, you hear them pitying the men shown on the pictures, and saying : "That is how they ill-treat us when they take our photographs ! (1)"

But the great and dangerous parting of soul and body, which 774
causes certain death, is that which wizards operate by their magic 754
charms. We shall study these strange conceptions in Chapter 761
III. They firmly believe that such is the result of witchcraft ;
so, when some one is dying, and the divinatory bones have revealed
that the disease was caused by a certain *noji* (witch or wizard), the

(1) The following reflection well illustrates the superstitious fear which Natives have of likenesses of the dead. Before the 1894 war broke out, I had gone to show the magic lantern in remote heathen villages, and people accused me of having caused the disturbance by bringing to life again (*pfusha*) men who had died long ago.

754 magician shuts him in with the dying man in the hut and gives him
 774 the following command : "Bring back the spirit which you have
 taken and hidden somewhere." Some magicians, who are more
 761 powerful than the wizards, pretend to be able to find the stolen
 spirit and so to restore the patient to health. In cases of epilepsy,
 or of any psychic trouble attended with unconsciousness, when the
 sick person returns to his senses, they triumph : have they not
 brought back the soul? But they say that this must be done in
 haste. No time must be lost!

775 Lastly, the final unsheathing of personality takes place at death.
 The body becomes rotten, but the shadow goes away and continues
 its life as a god, shikwembu. The belief in the continuation of life
 after death is universal, being at the base of Ancestralatry, which
 is the religion of the tribe. We shall study the ideas relating to the
 future life when dealing with the gods.

What Thongas can absolutely not understand is the resurrection
 of the body. "Mbuti yi fa, yi bola ; homu yi fa, yi bola ; munhu a
 fa, a bola!" — "The goat dies and rots, the ox dies and rots, man
 dies and rots!" answers the sceptical Thonga when he hears the
 story of the resurrection.

On the whole their ideas of future life are not so very different
 from those of the ancient Greeks, who believed that the human
 soul went after death to the realm of shadows.

787 *Dreams* are not generally liked by the Thongas. If something
 828 they happened to dream really takes place, it "disgusts" them
 (nyenyetsa). When a man has seen a woman several times in his
 dreams, especially if she was pregnant, he will consult the bones.
 If he dreams that he has relations with her, he may go next day and
 hit her with a stick. He leaves the stick on the ground and goes
 away without a word. According to Mboza, this is done to get
 rid of the obsession, and to prevent the dream from becoming
 reality. That is the reason, I suppose, why a Christian boy once
 said to his missionary : "I dream of many people, but I keep quiet!"
 Amongst Thongas dreams do not seem to play the great part
 which the animistic theory attributes to them in the formation
 of primitive beliefs.

lightning), or animistic (Son-of-the-Moth). But they are not of much importance. They belong to the same category as the description given by the Psalmist of the sun as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, or to that of Homer comparing the break of the day to a young damsel with rosy fingers. This is poetry, mere personification of natural objects, or forces, and not beliefs. The poetical tendency is very marked amongst primitive races. It may be that ideas of this kind were more firmly held in former times, if the tribe has really passed through a more mythological phase, a hypothesis for which there are some grounds.

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2) COLLECTIVE BELIEFS.

The beliefs of the Thongas which deserve to be called by that name because they are universal and express themselves in important rites and customs, are the following :

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1. The human soul continues its existence after death, when it is endowed with new powers which make it an object of awe and fear. *The spirits of the ancestors* are the main objects of religious worship. They form the principal category of spirits (psikwembu).

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2. Although the spirits of the departed generally have nothing to do with people other than their descendants, some of them, especially those belonging to foreign tribes, can take possession of living men and cause troubles which must be cured by a process of exorcism. This is the second category of spirits.

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3. Some individuals have the power of magically unsheathing themselves during the night, and their spirit goes out to torment, or to kill and eat other people. These are the *wizards* (baloyi) ; this third category of spirits accomplish their wicked deeds when separated from the body, but their body is still living and they re-enter it. These three beliefs are distinctly animistic.

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4. There is in man, and in a few large animals, a semi-spiritual principle, the *nuru*, which escapes from the body when the individual is killed in war, or in hunting, and through which the dead man, or animal, avenges himself or itself on the murderer. What is the relation between the *nuru* and the shadow (sitjhuti)? This is not stated. The *nuru* seems to be of a more material nature, as it can enter a root, and it remains attached to the corpse and the bones of the person or animal killed. This category of spiritual enemies, probably invented under the influence of fear and remorse, has no connection with ordinary people,

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cancel the rash oath (1). The elder will scold him severely, but will eventually accept his excuses. This meeting for confession and reconciliation is called *ku hahlela madjieta*, even if no other act, no *tsu*, or prayer, is performed. — The reconciliation may, however, be celebrated in a more solemn manner by a ceremony, which is attended by the elder members of the family. The brother who pronounced the imprecation prepares a decoction of a special herb, called *mudahomu*, and pours it into a *sala* shell. Everyone assembles on the square, and the two former enemies sit in the midst, on the bare ground. The offender raises the shell to his lips, sips the decoction, spits it out with the customary *tsu*, and says: "This is our *djieta*. We pronounced it, because our hearts were bitter. To-day it must come to an end. It is right that we make peace." The other brother, the offended one, then takes the shell, and after going through the same rite of the *tsu*, says: "I was justly angry, because it was he who first offended me! But let it be ended to-day; let us eat out of the same spoon, drink out of the same cup, and be friends again." Then he breaks the shell, and they drink and enjoy themselves together.

In the Northern clans this offering is called *byalwa bya huwa*, the beer of noise (on account of the noise made by those who quarrelled). It is considered as necessary, not only to reconcile the estranged brothers, but as a protection against wizards. Wizards might be encouraged to bewitch these men, thinking that, if one of them met with misfortune, people would say that his brother had cast a spell over him; the wizards would then have an opportunity of killing him without fear of being discovered! The offering consists of many sorts of cereals, mealies, millet, sorgho taken from the granaries of all those who have fought; two handfuls of the

(1) See also my article on "The Sacrifice of Reconciliation" amongst the Ba-Ronga (*South African Journal of Science*, February 1911). The *djieta* is any rash oath, and not only one pronounced against a brother. If a man swears that he will never enter a pool again (because he has been stung), or a river (because he has been followed by a crocodile), it is likewise a *djieta*. Should he find it necessary to enter this lake or this river again, he must first *hahlela djieta*, i. e. cancel his oath by a sacramental act. This is not necessarily a prayer to his gods, but only an invocation addressed to the imprecation itself: "You *djieta*, I said I would enter this lake no more, but I want to *tyeba* (p. 86) and to eat fish! Don't cause me to suffer for it." Then he takes some water in his hands, and throws it into the pool.

755 questions put to it : "I entered into this *ligodo*, i. e. into this body, this vessel, in such and such a manner. Her husband had gone to work in the gold mines. I entered into him while he was seated on a stone, and when he returned home I left him and entered into his wife." — "Are you alone, spirit?" is the usual question, to which it may reply : "No, I have my son and my grandson with me ;" and, if the witnesses suspect that there really are several spirits in the patient, the tambourine symphony is again resorted to, in order to dislodge the entire company. Sometimes the possessed pronounces as many as ten different names.

Or it may be that the gobela only asks the name of the father and grandfather of the possessing spirit, in order the better to know the latter with all his genealogy. Such was the case with Mboza. "My father is Ndlebende," said the spirit. — "Ho!" answered the gobela, "then you are Mboza, son of Ndlebende." And he identified the spirit in that way.

755 It may be that, at the first sitting, the spirit will claim some
533 satisfaction — a "nturu," a piece of calico of such and such a colour. It is also generally at this time that the patient will sing his song. Every possessed person invents a song which will be henceforth his, and by means of which crises, or trances will be provoked or cured. Nwashinhwana sang :

Alas ! my father ! Medicine-men can do nothing for me !
Who will deliver me ?

Mboza :

I am the one who wanders about, I come out from the body of magicians.

These songs are generally in Zulu, and it is asserted that, even if the patient does not know this language, he will be able to use it in his conversation, by a kind of miracle of tongues !

The first rite is now completed. It has succeeded in forcing the spirit to reveal its name (1).

754 (1) Exorcism by drum beating is the classical method of expelling spirits. Of late
755 years, since 1910, another method has been invented called *ku femba* which, strange to say, is connected with a new word borrowed from European Animism, the word *shipeke*, now current in Thonga terminology. *Shipeke* comes from the Boer spook, which means ghost. According to the Native idea, wizards have power to enslave ghosts and make them work in their own fields during the night. They can also send them to take possession of their victims and torment them. If a patient is supposed to

2) THE RITE OF THE GOGO BASIN.

When Mboza had finished revealing the name of the spirit possessing him, he had to undergo the rite of the gobo. His head was dipped into this, not entirely, but so that his eyes, at least, were plunged in the water. Then the gobela said: "Open your eyes." He felt a sensation of burning, and saw nothing but a red space with black dots running to and fro through the field of vision. He was kept in that position for a good long time. Then he raised his head, and the water ran all over his face and on to his body: he was purified (a basile). But this rite does not seem to be strictly a purification rite. By this kind of baptism the patient is said to have "crossed the sea." He enters upon a new life, and it is clearly a rite of passage. Now he will be able to speak, because "he has seen everything." It is the drug which "makes one see" (muri wa ku bonisa). Some are said to have learnt divination by this gobo/ablution.

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Having undergone these two first parts of the treatment, Mboza says he slept soundly. Next day, came the third.

3) THE APPEASEMENT BY BLOOD (KU THWAZA).

During the confabulation following the concert of tambourines, the spirits speaking through the mouth of the patient, although

be possessed by one of these shipoko, the exorcist will proceed with the femba in the following manner. He prepares a little crown made of medicinal roots woven together, similar to the *hori* which women place on their heads when carrying their water jugs. The patient lies down in his hut, surrounded by the mathwaza beating their drums. The magician touches one of his limbs with the *hari*, blows upon it, brings it close to his lips and draws in his breath. If nothing happens, he touches another limb, the arm, the side, the leg, the head, drawing in his breath each time, searching for the ghost. Suddenly he is seized by a fit, and falls down unconscious! The ghost has entered him, he has swallowed it. His attendants raise him up and take him outside the hut. They begin to ask him: "Who are you?" He tells them his name; he also informs them that he has been sent by so and so, a wizard. This wizard may be "an inhabitant of your village, someone with whom you eat porridge every day!" The shipoko continues his confession: "Yes! this man has sent me to kill the patient."

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We shall hear more of these shipoko when dealing with witchcraft. We find here a curious mixture of witchcraft and the ideas of possession, with the addition of a European element. My informant assures me that this femba rite is quite modern, and I can readily believe it.

158 transported into the realm of divinity, thus giving rise to the true gods
 753 and the devils. Possessing spirits are not worse than ancestor-gods. They all are non-moral. They can bless and curse, and their moral character is not taken into account at all.

2) The progress of modern psychology gives an explanation of many of these phenomena. The disease of the personality which manifests itself in the presence of a double psychological consciousness is well-known; the hypnotic suggestion which the tambourine players unconsciously exert on their victims, sufficiently explains the origin of the disease, and the kind of life led by the exorcised is well calculated to develop their mediumistic faculties. So many of the so-called miracles of possession are easily accounted for. It would however be going too far to exclude, a priori, any possibility of external spiritual influences in [797] those phenomena. There is one very striking fact which is a source of great wonder to the Natives. These patients, as soon as they put themselves under Christian influence, are healed at once and for ever. We have, amongst our converts, exorcists who had acquired great fame, and who recount, with glowing eyes, how they have been delivered from their terrible anguish by their new faith. For, whatever success they may have obtained in their career of exorcists, their condition was a disease, a painful disease, and they are extremely glad to have been delivered from it. This fact must certainly be remembered when trying to arrive at an explanation of possession.

C. WITCHCRAFT.

789 I have pointed out, in an article published in the Report of
 754 the S. A. A. A. S., of 1906, how little comprehension most White people have of this important but difficult subject. A confusion is almost always made between the *witches* and the *witch-doctors*. The French word *sorcier* and the English term *sorcerer*, indiscriminately used for those who cast spells and for magicians, lead to the same misconception. In order to avoid errors it is, I think, imperative first of all clearly to distinguish between *Black Magic* and *White Magic*. The adjectives black and white are not employed in this connection amongst South African Natives, but Thongas certainly do make the distinction and possess different terms for each. Black magic is called *Buloyi*; it consists of the

criminal magical practices by which wizards and witches bewitch innocent folk. Buloyi is a crime. White Magic is called *Bungoma*, and means the magical operations of those who combat evil influences and use their powers for the benefit, and not for the ruin, of their countrymen. The *mungoma* (magician) is consequently the great enemy of the *noyi* (caster of spells). It may be that the power of both is at bottom of the same nature. But the use they make of it is entirely opposed, the one exerting it in the interests of Society, the other against it. We shall therefore have to deal with these two categories of persons in two separate paragraphs.

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1. *Black Magic (Buloyi).*

Buloyi, an abstract noun of the bu-ma class, as well as *noyi* [192] (pl. *baloyi*), is derived from the verb *ku loya* (Ro.), *lowa* (Dj.), to bewitch. This word is very interesting. It seems to have been known already in the Ur-Bantu (Comp. Meinhof, *Grundriss*, p. 173) and exists in Swaheli, Herero, Xosa, Sutho, Thonga, etc. Strange to say, the stem is absent in Zulu, where it is replaced by *thakata*. In Thonga its most common meaning is to bewitch. But the word is also applied to the act of a man who marries his near cousin (I. p. 258). Moreover Nkolele, describing to me the sacrifice in the sacred wood, and speaking of the *ntukulu* who prepares to steal the offering, said: "Here is the *noyi*, ready to come and steal the beer..." I also heard the crocodile stone, used by the chief as a charm to protect his life, called *buloyi bya hosi*, the magical power of the chief (I. p. 393); these instances show that the word *loya* is sometimes, though rarely, used in a more general sense. Its technical meaning, however, is and remains: to injure or kill by enchantment. Who are these *baloyi*, and what crime do they perpetrate?

1) THE BALOYI.

The *baloyi*, or people possessing the evil eye, are numerous in each tribe. Their power is hereditary, but, strange to say, it is transmitted by the mother and not by the father. Therefore

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- 754 should a polygamist have three wives, one of whom is a *noyi*, all the children he will have by that "*noyi*" wife will be *baloyi*, and his other children will not be so. This dreadful power is sucked in at their mother's breast when they are still infants, but it must be strengthened by special medicines in order to be really efficient. The "*noyi*" mother chooses one of her sons to whom she does not give these drugs, and he will be free from *buloyi*. She does this in order that, if one of her offspring should later on be accused of having killed by witchcraft and be called to pass through the ordeal (of which we shall speak hereafter), the immune child may be sent in his place to undergo the trial. The chief will consent to this substitution, as it is well known that all the sons of a "*noyi*" woman are equally *baloyi*. But the intoxicating medicine of the ordeal will have no effect on the substitute, and therefore the true *noyi* will escape!

These *baloyi* know each other. They form a kind of *secret society* within the tribe, and they assemble during the night — in their spiritual bodies — to eat human flesh in the desert. There they form a true "*hubo*," that is, a meeting for discussion. They discuss what they will do to injure property or destroy life. They sometimes fight. If one of them is ~~debated~~ in the discussion, suggesting, for instance, that there should be no mealies this year, a proposal which is not accepted by the others, they condemn him to pay a fine, and this fine will consist of a human body, which he will have to provide, after having killed it by witchcraft. It may be that he will choose his own child to bring to the horrible banquet! This shows that there are more and less powerful *baloyi*, and they are constantly trying to overcome each other in finding out more efficient charms.

As regards the other members of the tribe who are not witches, or wizards, they are regarded by them as stupid beings who deserve no better fate than to be eaten wholesale by the clever *baloyi*! These man-eaters are the truly intelligent, the superior, the wise ones! (Ba *tlharihile*). They are also called for that reason "*bahanyi*" — "those who live," no doubt because they possess a kind of superior life. They are, however, greatly feared by the others, and when a boy wishes to marry, the main thing to

consider in the choice of his wife is that she should not belong to a family of witches. The accusation: "You are a *noyi*"¹ is the gravest insult which one man can utter to another (1). 754 [578]

The activity of the *baloyi* is almost entirely nocturnal. For this reason they are sometimes called by the euphemism: "*ba busiku*" — "the men of night." In fact, they possess the faculty of getting out of themselves at night time; they have large wings, and, after having left their huts by the crown of grass which covers the top, or by the closed door, they fly through the air and betake themselves to their horrible work.

As they are active in the darkness of night a connection is established between them and nocturnal birds, especially *owls* (*kuhunu*). When the sinister cry of this bird is heard, men take a torch upon which they have spit out of their mouths a little *ndjao* powder, and chase away the creature. *Baloyi* are also identified with the little moving lights sometimes seen in the marshes, the will-o'-the-wisps, the fires of the night (*mindjilo ya busiku*), the belief being that these fires are either the *baloyi* themselves, or that they are sent by the *baloyi* as a threat (2). We have seen (p. 720) that the wizards who ride on hippopotami during the night are credited with the power of producing flames similar to lamps. [825]

Two questions here arise. Does the Native mind imagine that 000

(1) Thongas are extremely sensitive in regard to a possible suspicion that they are *baloyi*. When I proposed to my pupils in the Shiluvane Institution that they should move up for the bad season to the sanatorium which we had set up in the mountains, in order to avoid the dangers of fever in the Low Country, not wishing to abandon their comfortable accommodation at the station, they made great difficulties. I therefore said to them: "But if your devoted teacher, Miss So-and-So, catches the fever, on account of the heat and moisture of the malarial climate, will you not be responsible for whatever may happen?" This remark caused quite a commotion amongst the pupils. "What?" they said. "We are then *baloyi*! We have the power of killing people by witchcraft!"

(2) One of my informants says: "We are walking peacefully along the path at night-time, chatting pleasantly with our companions. Suddenly a will-o'-the-wisp appears. We at once stop on seeing this terrible object, for one of us must be the culprit. It cannot arise from any other cause. We organise a meeting for confession (*rerela nyiwa*, see below), and thus rebuke the *noyi* who is amongst us. Sometimes people who see the fires of the night trample on the ground, take a pinch of earth between their fingers and put it to their mouths (*khabuta*). (This may be a kind of "mhamba" similar to that described on page 391, aimed at obtaining protection against the "enemies of the earth.")

2 [literally "caster of spells" -- see pp. 504 ff., cat. 116-Analyst]

754 Two questions here arise. Does the Native mind imagine that
 828 a true unsheathing of the personality takes place when the baloyi go on their nocturnal expedition, or that they leave the hut themselves, in their entirety, in their ordinary persons? As far as I could make out, the Sutho theory is different from the Thonga. The Ba-Sutho say that the wizard goes altogether, soul and body. Nothing remains on the mat when he has departed for his nocturnal ride! He casts spells over the other inhabitants of the hut, and they sleep so heavily that they notice nothing. The Thongas tell a different story. According to them, the noyi is but a part of the personality. When he flies away, his "ntjhuti," his shadow, remains behind, lying on the mat. But it is not the true body that remains. It appears as such only to the foolish non-initiated. In reality what remains is a *wild beast*, with which the noyi has chosen to identify himself. This fact was disclosed to me by the following striking confession of S. Gana, a very intelligent Nkuna. "Suppose," he said, "my father is a noyi and I am not. I wish to marry a certain girl whom I love. My father knows that she is a noyi, because they all know each other, and he tells me: 'Don't do that! She is *clever*; you will repent!' However, I persist in my idea. He urges me to abandon the plan, and threatens me with great misfortune. I marry her. One night, my father enters my hut and awakens me. He says to me: 'What did I tell you! Look! Your wife has gone!' I look at her place and find her sleeping calmly — 'No. Here she is.' — 'That is not she! She is away! Take this assagai and stab her. — 'No, father, I dare not.' — 'Do as I say!' And he puts the assagai into my hand and makes me strike her violently in her leg. A cry, the cry of a wild beast, is heard, and a hyena appears in the place of my wife, a hyena which deposits its faeces in its fear, and escapes from the hut, howling. My father gives me some powder to swallow so that I shall be able to recognise the baloyi and their ways and habits. He leaves me — trembling greatly from fear — and goes home. When the sun is about to rise, I hear a noise like that of the wind in the branches, and suddenly something falls down from the top of the hut beside me. It is my wife. She lies sleeping, but her leg shows a wound, the wound that had been made in the hyena!"

From this dramatic story it must be inferred that, according to the idea of the Ba-Thonga, there is a true unsheathing of the personality when the *noyi* goes about its nightly work. 754 828

A second question arises, which is this. As the *baloyi* lead a double existence, a day-light existence in which they are merely men, and a nightly existence, in which they perform their work as witches, are they aware, during the day, of what they have done during the night? In other words, are they conscious of their doings as witches? The question is difficult to answer, as there seems to be no clear idea on this point in the Native mind. The old, genuine view is that a *noyi* *does not know what he is doing*; he is not even aware that he is a *noyi* until he has been revealed as such by the methods which will be explained later. Therefore he is unconscious. His nightly activity is unknown to him when he returns to his ordinary daily life. For instance, my informants assure me that a man may have sent a crocodile to kill another, during his *noyi* existence, but that he will be the first to show sympathy to the poor sufferer, and to deplore this sad accident. And he will be amazed when the diviner points him out as having caused the death by his *buloyi*, of which he was in entire ignorance. But those *baloyi* who have long practised their horrible tricks would seem to be aware and even proud of their doings, and therefore more or less conscious of their double life. Some of them go even further; they renounce their evil deeds and become magicians, using the knowledge they have acquired to baffle the enchantments of other *baloyi*, as we shall see.

But let us hear what the dreadful acts are which they commit in their *baloyi* form.

2) THE CRIMES OF THE BALOYI.

(a) The *baloyi* are in the first place *thieves*. This is the least criminal aspect of their activity. They steal mostly mealies or the products of the fields. They empty the ground-nuts of their contents (p. 12). The magicians have a kind of medicine with which they plaster their mealie cobs in the gardens, and the *noyi*, when he wants to tear them from the stalk, remains a prisoner 754

754 on the spot, unable to withdraw his hand from the cob! But, what is even more curious, the baloyi of one country assemble and form an army and go to fight with the baloyi of another, in order to deprive them of their mealies and carry them away to their own fields. For instance, in 1900, there was a great war between the baloyi of Mpfumu, near Lourenço Marques, and those of the peninsula of Inyack, at the entrance of Delagoa Bay. That year the Kafir beans were plentiful at Mpfumu, and this was explained by the fact that the Mpfumu baloyi had won the victory over their Inyack enemies. They owed their success to the following trick. They gathered a large number of seeds of the little cucumber, called *nkakana*, and made with them a kind of enormous ladder, which was suspended midway between sky and sea; upon it they crossed the 20 or 30 miles of the bay of Delagoa and stole all the Kafir beans of Inyack (1). If a tempest has uprooted trees and broken branches, people are sure to say that the "army (yimpi) of the baloyi" has passed in the shape of a terrific storm during the night.

754 b) But the great crime of the baloyi is that of *killing*. They
789 are murderers, and all the more to be feared as they act unconsciously, without being seen or known. Two motives inspire their crimes — hatred and jealousy. If one of them has been offended, he is sure to revenge himself by putting his enemy to death. During the night he escapes from his hut (as we have seen above), opens his wings and flies directly to the dwelling of the man he hates. But the habitation of this man is well protected; all round it there is a spiritual fence made up of charms, various

(1) On one of these expeditions to the Inyak Islands the baloyi of the Movumbi district wished to buy food from their colleagues beyond the Bay. A certain woman, who was a great *noyi*, took her daughter-in-law with her, but the latter was not a *noyi*. However she was led through the air, along the *nkakana* ladder, to the village of Magilankinsin, a headman of Inyak. This man refused to accept her, as she was ignorant of the buloyi art, and sent her back home. In the meantime the husband, Midialen, noticed that his wife was not sleeping in the hut. When she reappeared in the morning he asked her: "Where have you been?" — "To Inyaka." — "Indeed!" — "Yes! I saw everything there." — "How did you go?" — "I do not know." — "How did you return?" — "I do not know." — "Have you seen Magilankinsin?" — "Yes!" The husband suggested that his mother had played this trick by means of her buloyi and chased her away from his village. Mbosa told the story as absolutely authentic, and added "these events occurred some ten years ago."

medicines which close the kraal against any invasion of witches. What must he do in order to perpetrate his crime? He has first made an agreement with another *noyi* residing in that village, who has made an opening in this spiritual fence, similar to one of the small holes in the material one! He then gets into the kraal, tries to penetrate into the hut by the door, finds it closed; beats on it and, being unable to enter that way, flies to the crown of the hut and descends through it into the abode of the enemy, calmly sleeping on his mat. Then he proceeds to the bewitching operation, and the poor bewitched man is condemned to die! "O *loyiwile*," — "he has been bewitched;" "ku sa ntjhuti ntsena," — "only his shadow remains." They also say that only the "ntjhumbu," the corpse, has been left, his true self having been stolen and eaten. He is sometimes called *ntungulu*, a word used to designate a wasp whose nest has been destroyed, and which flies about disconcerted, not knowing where to go, unable to sting, because it has no home... The heart of the bewitched has been stolen and put somewhere in a hole or a cavern (*mhakwen*). "Ba mu pepulile," they have ravished him, (like a feather taken away by the wind). He will get up in the morning, and die some days later, but what will die will be only his shadow. He himself was killed during that frightful night. He is already eaten! Or he will become mad (*lihlangi*) and people will say: "The living have had the better of him" — "Ba mu kotile bahanyi." Here we find again, in an even more mysterious form, the idea of the duality of the human personality. How it is possible for a man who has still some days or months to live to be regarded as already entirely eaten up, I do not pretend to explain. Such is however the Native idea. One of my informants tried to overcome the difficulty by saying that what the *noyi* takes with him to eat is the inside, the bowels; the outward frame alone remains, and the man will soon die! Most of the Natives, when the absurdity of the idea is pointed out to them, laugh and say nothing.

In order to attain his criminal ends, the *noyi* may resort to various means; he may point at his enemy *with the index finger*, which is a common method of bewitching in many nations. If, later on, you are overtaken by misfortune, you will remember

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● 754 that so and so has "shown you with the finger" (*komba hi litibo*), and will suspect him of having cast a spell over you. (Comp. I. p. 250.) Or he may obtain a hold on you by *taking your own blood*, if this has by chance been shed on the ground, and using it as a means of bewitching you, (*a ku loyela ha yone*). Hence the precaution universally taken of covering one's blood with earth, should any have dripped from a wound (p. 360). But the five chief methods which a *noyi* has at his disposal are the following : *ruma*, *mitisa*, *matshelwa*, *ntshutshu* and *mpfulu*.

The *ruma* (to send) consists in sending either a crocodile, or a lion, or more often a snake, to the place where the enemy is about to pass. He will be killed or wounded. We may recall the story of Gëbuza, whose nose was torn off by a hyena ; this is a typical case of *ruma*. In Maputju, the heathen accused the converts of bewitching them by means of the owls which took shelter under the roof of the chapel! In Khosen also the Christians were charged with having sent a crocodile from Nkomati River into the Sokotiba lake to kill those who refused to be converted to Christianity! If the *noyi* does not wish to kill, he may only send antelopes to destroy the fields and eat the sweet potatoes. Even in the Christian village of Shiluvane, during the days when the "duykers" are plentiful, and become a nuisance, you may hear some one say : "*They* are sending us their *duikers*!" Who are *they*? A mystery! *They* are the *baloyi*! But do not call them by their name!

The *mitisa* (*ku mita*, to swallow, *ku mitisa*, to make somebody swallow) is the only one of these five methods of bewitching used during the day. It consists in giving to a visitor something to eat or drink into which certain drugs have been introduced. The mealie pap or the beer look just as usual, but, owing to the enchantments of *baloyi*, as soon as you have swallowed them, they are transformed, in your throat, into any kind of noxious creature, which threatens to suffocate you, and gives rise to a disease and perhaps produces death! You may thus have swallowed a snake, a beetle of the *Copris* genus, one of those strange dung-eaters, a big fly, or certain kinds of flesh of animals. The great effort of the magician to whom you will apply for treatment will be to remove

these foreign bodies, and, when you vomit, he will show you with triumph a bit of bone, a tooth, the famous beetle, or other objects which he himself had cleverly placed there beforehand (p. 457). There is a medicine which Natives are fond of having inoculated into their tongues, and which has the wonderful property of forcing the bewitched food to reveal its true character when you eat it. If you have been treated with this, you will hear the cracking of the elytra of the beetle, and at once be able to spit out of your mouth the death-containing food!

The *matahelwa* (ku tshela, to throw) are not only these foreign bodies which the noyi introduces into you by means of poisoned food, but may be *tingati* (blood) poured on you during the night in such quantity that the floor of the hut will be found quite wet in the morning (1).

The *nichutchu* (ku tchutchu, to inspire) is another way of getting rid of an enemy. It is a *bewitching of the will* by which the noyi inspires his enemy with the idea of leaving the country. Without any motive, the poor bewitched person prepares to go to Johannesburg, or anywhere else. There he will become the prey of other baloyi, who will kill him. When a boy dies in the mines, as hundreds of them do, his parents think: — "He has been killed by such and such a disease." But the author of his death is not in Johannesburg, he is here at home; it is the noyi who hated him and made him go by "ntchutchu."

The *mpfulu* is still worse. This word, which comes from the verb ku pfula, to open, designates the mysterious power which the baloyi possess of *opening* all kinds of things. One of them, a Nkuna, named Nwayekeyeke, had charms to open the *oxen kraals*;

(1) The following story fittingly illustrates this kind of "baloyi." An evangelist of the Manyika region, named Abel M. had taken into his house his wife's daughter. He was himself without children. The girl fell on the threshold of the hut and injured her leg. Her parents took her home again, but found the leg very much emaciated, and consumed the bones. The diviner told them that Abel had "loya" his niece through sheer jealousy because he had no children; he had "eaten the girl's leg," but, being a hunter, he had killed an antelope and introduced the femur of the animal into the leg in place of the bone; the true bone was however still somewhere in Abel's hut and the magician offered to go to the evangelist's village, and boasted that he would be able to find it. Fearing a scandal, Abel entreated his wife's parents not to allow this. They said: "Then take the girl back into your home and treat her." He did so, and the girl eventually recovered.

- 754 during the night, he would come into a village holding a hyena tail daubed over with peculiar medicines, and would throw all the inhabitants into a deep sleep. Then, waving the tail, he would open the kraal and call the cattle out. Flying with the rapidity of the wind, he would then be followed by the whole herd which he had bewitched. When tired, he would jump on to a tree and rest for a while, fearing lest the oxen should run over him and tread him down, they being irresistibly attracted by the tail. Should anyone see him on his way, he would say: "Take an ox, I give it to you," until he reached his village, and housed the stolen oxen in his own kraal. But there are other kinds of *mpfulu*: the power of *opening the hut*, removing the husband sleeping there without waking him, and committing adultery with his wife. However the great *mpfulu* consists in *opening a man*. The following story will show how this criminal act is accomplished. Some fifty years ago, a young man called Nkokana, the uncle of my informant, astonished the whole tribe by his marvellous skill in dancing like a chameleon. The circumcision school was just over, and on the last day of it all the boys had to enter solemnly the kraal of the chief, performing the ceremony which has been described I. p. 93, and which is called *ku nenga*. One of the men of the tribe, who was a *noyi*, was struck by the perfect performance of Nkokana, and, filled with jealousy, resolved to bewitch him. As the boys were going home that same day, happy to have reached the end of all their trials, they had to cross a thick wood; suddenly a voice was heard calling: "Nkokana!" The boy said: "Yes, I am coming," and went to the place from which the voice came. But he found nobody. Instead of going back to his companions, who were waiting for him, he ran all through the bush, as if possessed by a kind of madness, always following the voice, but with no success. The night passed. He came back home ~~entirely~~ worn out, a mere shadow of himself, and died some days later. He had been "opened up" by the witch. When this sort of bewitching takes place it is probable that the *noyi* wishes to enslave his victim, and make him work for him.

c) This leads us to the last of the crimes of the *baloyi*. Their object may not be to kill their victims, but *to use them as their*

servants, for ploughing their fields, cutting their wood, and so on. One day the footprints of a leopard were seen in a mealie garden near the Shiluvane station. People were convinced that this was nothing but a bewitched person, sent there during the night in the form of an animal (1) to serve the owner of the field; it is said that the baloyi, when assembled in their hubo, choose those whom they like amongst the victims they have overcome by the ntshutshu, by their magical inspiration, and change them into leopards, hyenas and snakes, compelling them either to till the fields, or to uproot mealies in the gardens of others, and to "lead" (byisa) the stems and plant them in the gardens of baloyi. A Nkuna of Thabina once claimed to have witnessed such a case of nocturnal theft, — and he was expelled from the country because, as people said, he could not know of such deeds if he were not himself a noyi. Of late years, since the word *shipoko* has been adopted by the Rongas (see p. 488, note 1) it is believed that these nocturnal servants of the baloyi are the ghosts of dead people and that they resemble little children. The baloyi hide them in the forests during the day and take them during the night to till their fields. As we shall see, these baby workers bewitched by the wizards were much spoken of during the strange Murimi revival which I shall describe later on. (See also the song of the Christian girl who ridicules the deceitful witch (p. 299) and compare with App. V.)

To be fair towards the wizards I must add that there are also some good baloyi, viz., baloyi who use their power to bless. They can do this when sent by the ancestor-spirits to increase the produce of the fields, if the prayer of the luma day has been heard by the gods (I. p. 396). In this case the wizards are said to have *loyela maximu*, bewitched the fields to make them produce more (loyela, applicative derivative of loya). This would seem to show

(1) The connection established between animals and baloyi is pushed even further in Maputja. My colleague, the late Rev. W. Audéoud, heard of baloyi who really look on themselves as the possessors of certain beasts. One of them owned a wild boar. A hunter killed the son of this wild boar and the noyi bewitched him, as he considered that he had a vested right of property in the son as well as in the father! We have seen, when dealing with hunting rites, that baloyi domesticate the hippopotami of the Komati river and use them as mounts (p. 72-74).

- 754 that baloyi are more or less subject to the ancestral gods. It may happen also that if somebody shows kindness to a noyi, this noyi will take him under his protection, and prevent his comrades from doing harm to his friend. But these are rare occurrences, and the baloyi are, and remain, criminals in the view of the Thongas.

Stealing, killing, enslaving are the principal crimes of these maleficent beings. But they can also cause any other species of harm to their infortunate victims. I have told the story of a young man who complained to me of having been deprived by the tricks of a noyi aunt of the power of having sexual intercourse with his wife; she was pregnant and the witch wished to act on the offspring in such a way as to change it into a snake, a hare, a quail, or a duiker, so that the mother should die on the day of the birth. (I. p. 187.)

II. *White Magic and Magicians.*

1) DISTINCTION BETWEEN MAGICIANS AND WIZARDS.

- 754 As previously stated, the power which the magicians claim to
 791 possess is perhaps not essentially different from that of the baloyi.
 756 They even sometimes boast that they are themselves baloyi, baloyi more powerful than the ordinary witches, and that they are thus able to discover them and baffle all their tricks. So Mathuza, one of the most celebrated Ronga witch-doctors, used to say: "I am the great Noyi! I am the one who kills. I can fly. So I know them all and I disclose them." But magicians differ absolutely from wizards in four ways, at least:

1) Their activity is not secret, nocturnal and more or less unconscious. They act openly, in the light, during the day, and do not hide their magical powers; on the contrary, they make a show of them, covering themselves with any number of charms; most of them wear "tingoya" and smear themselves with ochre (p. 100).

2) They all undergo a preparation, or pass through an initiation, differing according to the different kinds of magic they practise.

So they possess, so to speak, letters patent, either because they have been received into the society of their fellow-magicians (as is the case with medicine-men, exorcists, and throwers of bones), or because they have found new and powerful drugs during a sojourn, real or pretended, in the sea, the desert, or elsewhere.

3) Whilst baloyi are said to use *tingati* (blood) poisons, the magicians employ *miri*, i. e., medicinal herbs or objects, drugs which, however, are all thought to possess special powers. I do not say "supernatural" powers, as the notion conveyed by this word cannot exist in any definite form amongst people who have hardly a true conception of Nature. The stronger the *miri*, the stronger the magician. — In addition to their drugs, they certainly believe themselves endowed with personal power due to the development of their faculties of second sight, etc., which they also attribute to the spirits (ancestor-gods) from whom they have inherited their drugs.

4) The last point of difference but by no means the least important, is this : magicians are the supporters and upholders of the social order, and not criminals attempting to destroy it. They foretell the future, cure diseases, prevent misfortune of all kinds, fight against baloyi, and are regularly consulted by the Native Court for the detection of wizards.

Between the unconscious baloyi whose crimes are purely imaginary and the bangoma who use their magical powers for the benefit of those who have recourse to them, there certainly exists another category, i. e. wicked individuals who kill their fellow-men by means of real poisons or by criminal practices and do this quite consciously, either to avenge themselves on their enemies or to help others to get rid of those whom they hate. Such acts may be called *ku loya*, by an extended use of the term ; but there is another word to designate these crimes, the word *ku dambika*, which we already met with when speaking of the jilted lover who wishes to play an evil trick on the girl who despised him (I. p. 101). In the neighbourhood of Rikatla, there was a man who claimed to be a *noyi* of this type, and to have at the same time the power of "treating" (*daha*) buloyi. He was a Mu-Sutho, a stranger. Wishing to kill an enemy, a Ronga of the country asked his help ;

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754 the magician bade him first bring a sheep ; this he slew, took part
 791 of its fat, and smeared with it and with some very black drugs a
 root of the ntjhopfa tree (l. p. 58). This fat and these drugs were
 to give to the root the power of "taking away" the heart of the
 enemy ; the magician buried it in the road and assured his client
 that when the root was rotten his enemy would be dead. This
 root was discovered later on, owing to a revelation given by the
 bones, and the man who had consulted the magician had to pay
 a fine of £ 1. No doubt such conscious acts of witchcraft exist,
 but this is not the typical *loya*.

2) VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF MAGICIANS.

756 Some magicians specialise in one division of the immense domain
 791 of magic, but others claim to practise the magic arts in all their
 diversity.

1) Those whose activity bears a less magical character. These
 are the *ñanga* (yin-tin), or *ba-muri*, whom we met with when
 dealing with the medical art (Compare Chapter I. the Medicine-
 men).

2) Those who have passed through the ceremony of exorcism
 and have become exorcists. They are called *gobela*, and the
 character of their initiation has been sufficiently explained in
 Chapter II.

3) Those called *mungoma*, magicians proper, who have divinatory
 powers and can perform wonders, fight the *baloyi*, cause rain to
 fall, influence Heaven, etc., even if there has been no exorcism
 episode in their previous career.

4) Those whose principal qualification is the power to detect
baloyi, and who are called for that reason *shinusa*, "smellers-out."

5) The bone-throwers (*ba-bula*), whom we shall describe in
 Chapter IV.

The priests, *ba ku hahla*, do not enter into any of these cate-
 gories, their specific activity being of a totally different character ;
 they have recourse to Religion and not to Magic.

III. The Method of dealing with Wizards.

- 754 All the power of the magicians is resorted to in order to check
 756 the enchantments of the baloyi. Their drugs are used with two
 791 objects, — protection and cure, the cure consisting mainly in the
 disclosure of the wizard.

1) PROTECTIVE METHODS.

- 789 The village, as we have seen, (I. p. 311) is well protected with
 754 *anti-baloyi* drugs. The fence itself, the main entrance and the
 threshold of the headman's hut, have been magically treated when
 first built. But the magician, when he thinks it necessary,
 "revives" the drugs by burning his powder in a little fire on
 the road which enters the village. This protects the main
 entrance, and he does the same at the threshold of the headman's
 hut. The smoke will keep the wizards away. Stones, daubed
 with the powder, are placed in all directions to close the open-
 ings.

"These medicines act wonderfully," says Mankhelu. "Should
 a *noyi* succeed in entering the hut, the power of the smoke will
 be such that he will at once be revealed. The *noyi* will suddenly
 be seen there without any clothing, apparently dreaming, seeing
 nothing, knowing nothing. If it is a woman, I shall call her
 husband and show him his wife... 'What are you doing here?'
 he will say to her. She will not utter a word. Then I shall
 say to him: 'Look here, my friend... I might be hard on you.
 But I have pity. Do not allow your wife to do anything of the
 kind again. Pay me one or two oxen, and I will keep silent.'
 He will consent. Then I beat the woman with my stick. She
 awakes, and, quite ashamed of being in another hut without
 any clothing, she will fly away home!" Such is the testimony
 of Mankhelu, and he is certain of having succeeded more than
 once!!

Mboza asserted to me that he had witnessed a similar case

789 in Muthiyane (near Rikatla). A woman had been thus "surprised
 754 by the rising sun" (shwela, p. 307). She was stark naked and
 had something red, like fire, on both shoulders; these were the
 remnants of her wings. Having been overcome by the magical
 drugs she had been unable to reabsorb these wings into her
 flesh, and part of them remained outside. Every one ran away
 at this sight, and the chief ordered the woman to be shut up
 in her hut.

Some magicians used to fight the baloyi by *running through the bush during the night* and catching them as they flew by with their wings of fire. Note how Mholombo prevented two wizards from killing a woman (p. 500), and how the exorcised protect themselves by means of the mabophe drug, and by swallowing their niulu powder (p. 496). ¹/₂

2) METHOD OF DISCLOSING THE BALOYI.

754 But should all the protective medicines which surround the village, together with those which have been swallowed by the inhabitants, or by which they have been inoculated, remain without effect, and should a serious case of illness occur, one of those evils which are generally attributed to the baloyi, the first thing to do is to *detect* the culprit.

Who may he be? The patient's relatives have most probably already some idea on this point, because, at the beginning of most buloyi cases, something happens which arouses *suspicion*, and this is a very important point to be noted if we wish to find the psychological explanation of these customs. Perhaps there has been a quarrel between two persons, and one of them, in his anger, has said to the other: "N'ta ku bona" i. e. "I shall see you." On hearing this the people immediately say: "This man is a noyi. He has revealed by daylight his crimes of the night." The man himself had perhaps not the slightest idea of such a thing. The same conclusion will be drawn if he points to another person with his index finger (I. p. 250). An imprudent word which at first sight would appear quite innocent may have the same

¹/₂ [For further information on methods of dealing with wizards see pp. 525-535 -- Analyst]

result if hostile feelings already existed between two persons (1).
 Jealousy alone is sufficient to give rise to the suspicion even without a word having been uttered (2).

The fact of a woman having lost many children is also a reason for suspecting her of being a witch, as the death of a baby is constantly considered as having been caused by its own mother, who wished "to eat it." The fact of belonging to a family of *baloyi* is also an indication to the same effect, *buloyi* being hereditary, as we have seen.

But a mere suspicion is not sufficient to warrant action being taken against the suspected *noyi*. An objective proof, a piece of convincing evidence is required, and this the magicians are asked to supply. The patient's relatives go to the *diviner* who will cast the bones and discover whether the disease is due to witchcraft or not. This consultation is secret, and is merely preliminary. There are, in the sets of bones employed in Thonga divination, some which,

(1) The evangelist Silas G. was one day speaking to Saul N., an elder of his Church, about Church contributions and said: "So and so does not pay his dues. It would be good to show him his duty." Saul answered: "I do not wonder; that man has a bad wife and you are sure to fail in your duty when you have a bad wife!" — "No", said Silas. "Everyone ought to pay his contribution. You, for example, would certainly do your duty even if you had a bad wife!" — "Nevertheless I maintain that a wife who behaves badly takes away her husband's courage. Look at your own case, Silas. Your wife does harm to your work as an evangelist. Did she not say the other day when she saw my baby: 'How fat it is! It is like a pumpkin!'" On hearing these words Silas starts! They are an accusation of *buloyi*. To say that the baby was as fat as a pumpkin showed that the woman who used these words was ready to eat its body during the night; the evangelist's wife was a *noyi*! An enquiry was at once started to ascertain if she had really pronounced these words, and the whole little Church was upset. Finally the elder was blamed for having brought an accusation of *buloyi*, which is forbidden in the Native Congregations, and he resigned his office. The evangelist and his wife "became thin" owing to the mental suffering caused by the innuendo of the elder.

(2) I had amongst my evangelists a very active and intelligent man who cultivated large gardens and was well provided with everything. His neighbours began to suspect him for this reason. He said to them: "We ought not to work on Sundays," and this increased their suspicions. "It is evident", they said, "that he is not alone! How does he manage to have such splendid harvests when he does not work on Sundays? Surely he has others to till for him. He takes our backs and uses them to cultivate his big fields. And the reason why he has such wonderful crops is that he has taken our own mealies from our gardens by his witchcraft!" — "But," said others, "you cannot complain! Mealies are plentiful in your gardens too!" — "No," answered the enemies of the evangelist. "Though you see mealies in our gardens, they are no longer mealies; they have been taken away by him." They meant that, just as a bewitched person is no longer normal but has been emptied of his viscera, so the cereals had been robbed of their virtue by *buloyi*.

754 represent the *baloyi*, in particular the astragalus of the reedbuck, or
787 of the duiker, the small antelope which rambles about during
791 the night, just at the time when witches are at work. Should
this bone fall in a certain way near the bone representing the
patient, or near his amulets, which have been placed on the mat,
this shows that his disease is the result of *buloyi*. The name
of the *noyi* will be sought, and perhaps ascertained, on that
first day, but the parents of the victim will never venture to accuse
him merely on the testimony of the bones. The next step will
be to go to the *mungoma*, the magician who "smells out" the
baloyi.

The magician employs various means to find out a *noyi*.

a) *The Enchanted Horn.*

754 In the Murchison Range there is a magician who possesses an
791 enchanted horn, into which he introduces a short twig smeared
with an anti-*baloyi* medicine. Persons suspected of having killed
by witchcraft must try to pull the twig out of the horn. The
noyi will be unable to do this, though he may declare, like the
others: "I have not killed." Amongst the *Nkunas*, the magician
who has succeeded in finding out a wizard, takes his coat and
hangs it on a tree as a trophy.

b) *The Enchanted Flute.*

When some one dies and his relatives think he has been
bewitched, they can call a certain *mungoma* who "treats the
grave" with his drugs. If he thinks that he has discovered the
noyi, he gives to the bereaved a small flute, telling him to go
and play on it in the neighbourhood. This helps not only to
detect the wizard but to punish him; he will die. This rite is
called "to play on the little flute (*ku yimbelela shinangana*) for
somebody."

c) *The rera nyiwa, or ba hungwe.*

Rera nyiwa or *ba hungwe* means to summon an assembly for discovering wizards. This is done when the chief is ill, or when an epidemic has broken out and threatens the villages. The headman, or sub-chief, assembles all his people and says: "Hungwe!" (this word has the meaning of: "Take care!"). "The bones have declared it: It is so and so: a woman having two, three or four children... or married twice... or a widow... or a girl... or a man... or a medicine-man..... Cease your enchantments and make the patient live! We know you! Do not bring upon him bad influences during the night! If you do not restore him to health, we shall kill you!" All the people look at each other and try to discover who is meant by the bones and by the speaker. The *rera nyiwa* acts as a solemn warning to all the *baloyi* of the country, and may thus prolong the life of the chief.

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This method of combating *baloyi* is also resorted to in connection with the products of the soil when some fields are in good condition and others not, or when caterpillars or locusts have spoiled some whilst others have been spared. This inequality is due to the *baloyi*! In the region of Matalane, near Rikatla, this kind of *nyiwa* was performed as follows at the end of 1918. The clansmen assembled in the little capital, whilst the women were ordered to stay at home. The men visited all the gardens, those in the marshes as well as those on the sandy hill, and took from each of them food of all the different kinds, sweet potatoes, manioc, mealies, pumpkins, even pine-apples. Then the whole throng assembled somewhere in the bush, a big pot was brought, and they all ate from it, the man who had been designated by the bones taking the first mouthful (*luma*) and offering a "mhamba." Then he said to the people: "We have seen where food is plentiful and where it is wanting!" The aim of the whole performance was evidently to show the supposed wizards that they must cease their bewitching of the fields. It was at the same time a symbolical meal in which all the members of the little community ate some food from each of the fields, thus asserting that all must remain equal (*ba fanana*) and that this equality must not be destroyed by the wizards' robbing the others by their enchantments, and becoming rich at their expense.

d) *The smelling-out procedure.*

754 But should it be desirable to ascertain the name of the noyi,
 783 in order to punish him (for instance, in a case of death, where
 787 nothing remains but to avenge oneself on the murderer), the
 mungoma will proceed to the *shinusa divination*, the regular
 smelling-out. This can be done in two ways, either by questioning
 or by ecstasy.

1) *Smelling-out by questioning.* The relatives of the bewitched come to the *shinusa*, pay him £ 1, and ask him to find out the murderer. He makes them sit down in a half-circle, and, facing them, begins to put questions to them. They always answer by the word *mamoo*, which means yes, in the language of *bungoma*. Hence the Zulu term *vumisa* viz., "to make somebody say yes," applied to this ceremony. The *mamoo* is cool or warm, doubtful or convinced, and the clever diviner easily perceives every shade of meaning in this perpetual *mamoo*. He is well aware of all the disputes and hatred between the people and, in his investigation, he draws nearer and nearer to the man of whom the consulting party is thinking. Their *mamoo* becomes bolder. The questions are more precise. At last, when he feels himself in agreement with the consultants, the *mungoma* pronounces the name and lets his tail fall. He is bathed in perspiration after the great strain, and remains silent, as if he were indeed infallible; he has triumphantly "smelt out" the culprit. Next day, relatives of the patient go to the kraal of the noyi, waving branches, dance before him, and say: "So you are killing us!" The accused keeps silent. Then he says: "All right. We shall come to-morrow and also consult our *mungoma*." Both parties then go to another diviner. The performance of "smelling out" is again gone through, and very likely the verdict of the second *mungoma* will confirm that of the first; the augurs know that they must not contradict each other if they wish to maintain their authority, and the terrible tail falls on the head of the accused. As soon as proof and counterproof have been obtained, the case becomes a judicial one. The plaintiff brings the matter before the chief, who will not condemn until the

754 guilt of the pretended noyi is confirmed by ordeal, the trial by the
695 famous philter called *mondjo*.

787 2) *Smelling-out by ecstasy* partakes more or less of the character of the *rera nyiwa*. All the people have been assembled in the Capital. The chief wishes to collect together all the *baloyi* of the land. The diviner arrives, decked out with amulets and all the insignia of his power. In his hands he carries his magical



Photo D. Lanot.

Smelling-out a wizard.

tail, by way of a whip, and an assagay. He begins to dance, the crowd seated all round him, clapping their hands (*wombela*), and singing a chorus peculiar to the occasion :

Nwashongana khale ! Famba u ya teka, u ya teka, mungoma !
Beautiful dancer of slender figure ! Seek for it, seek for it, diviner !

He goes on dancing ; like Pythia of old he falls into a condition of extreme nervous excitement, ecstasy, inspiration. He brandishes his tail, dilates his nostrils, inhales the air on all sides, as if to smell out the spot from whence the evil influence has emanated, then takes to his heels in a certain direction, the assembly

754 still clapping their hands and singing. He approaches a hut,
 695 enters, and triumphantly plants his assagay in one corner. A hole
 787 is dug in that spot and — just where so and so places his wooden
 pillow when retiring to rest for the night — there are discovered
 a small gourd full of blood, packets of suspicious objects connected
 with enchantment, and perhaps a snake. It is quite possible
 that the diviner may have previously hidden these articles ;
 nevertheless he carries them exultingly away ; they are the
 wizards' weapons, the "bloods" (tingati) which they throw over
 their victims at night.

The shinusa returns to the village of the chief, who is very angry,
 and orders him to go and show these objects to their owner.
 Then the magician, making a sign to the crowd to stop singing,
 will go and throw the articles in front of the occupant of the
 hut to put him to shame before the whole assembly. The
 mysterious charms, and the noyi's gourd, must in every case be
 consumed by fire, and then the sickness and deaths in the village
 should cease.

e) *The Mondjo ordeal.*

754 As already pointed out, the final and supreme method of
 695 unmasking baloyi is the *mondjo ordeal*. This is a legal procedure
 ordered by the chief, a true method of obtaining information in a
 criminal case. This custom calls to mind the judgment of God in
 the Middle Ages (ordeal is derived from "urtheil," judgment) ; it is
 practised by the majority of the Bantu tribes, varying from one
 tribe to another, but everywhere it has the same end in view,
 namely the discovery of the casters of spells by the imposition of an
 ordeal which is supposed to be fatal to such as are guilty.

[137] This ordeal is called amongst the Ba-Ronga (as also from one
 end of the Thonga tribe to the other) *drinking the mondjo* (ku nwa
 mondjo). The mondjo is a plant of the Solaneae family, probably
 a *Datura*, which possesses intoxicating properties. With it a
 special magician prepares a beverage which is to act as a means of
 revelation. It can be resorted to by any individual accused of
 witchcraft, or of any other crime. A woman accused of adultery,

for instance, may say : "Let us go and drink the mondjo." The mondjo magician will give both the accused and the plaintiff a little of his drug, and the one who becomes intoxicated, or unconscious, after having drunk the magic beverage will be convicted of guilt. But the mondjo ordeal can also be ordered by the chiefs, just the same as the rera nyiwa, not only as a warning, but with the object of revealing the wizards and in order to get rid of them. 754 695

This is how the ceremony is performed in Nondwane. When it has been decided at the capital that all subjects shall undergo this ordeal, the chief sends word to the Shihahu folk to prepare the mondjo. These particular folk are a small clan inhabiting the left bank of the Nkomati, not far from the sea, northward of the district of Manyisa. The mondjo is cultivated by the medicine-men of Shihahu, but they have by no means the monopoly of it, for my neighbour, Hamunde, who lived at Rikatla, a few steps from the station, had one of these plants growing in his village, where I myself saw it. But it is at Shihahu that the recipe is known for the preparation of this magic philter. This is very complicated and intricate. It contains several strange ingredients, amongst others, it may be noted, *the fat of a leper long since deceased*, or a little of his powdered bones! To make sure of the efficacy of the drink, the Shihahu folk experiment upon a certain individual named Mudlayi. This man is considered the very chief, the "bull" of all the wizards of the country (nkunzi ya baloyi). He is more powerful than all the others in casting spells. If, therefore, the decoction produces in him the characteristic intoxicating effect by which the spell-casters are discovered, it is certain that the brewing has been a success. If, by any chance, Mudlayi should not have been intoxicated, word will be sent to the chief that the decoction has failed (yi hi hlulile), and another brew will be made, until the mondjo has attained the strength required. Then the people of Shihahu do not go directly to the chief, but, according to the rules of etiquette, to the counsellor who looks after the interests of their country. The other counsellors come to greet them, but the whole business is kept a great secret. Messengers are then sent to all the sub-chiefs, telling them to assemble at a

754 certain time, in a given place, bringing all their people with them.
695 This general assembly takes place on the borders of a lake. Every man and every woman must defile before the proprietors of the decoction and take a small mouthful of it, tepid, from a particular receptacle. Already at this stage of the proceedings some few, terror-stricken, make a confession: "Ndja loyal" — "I am a caster of spells," they cry. These persons are then collected together and placed on one side under a tree. The rest sit down in a line, in the fiery glare of the noon-day sun. There they are, then, all seated and exposed to the torrid heat of the sun's rays. They have received the following order: "Do not move! You must not scratch yourselves! Remain motionless!"

Mudlayi begins to dance in front of them. With widely opened eyes he glares in a peculiar manner at those who have sipped the mondjo. In his hair is fixed a large feather, which he waves up and down by moving his head. Everyone gazes at him intently.

Suddenly some one scratches his arm. Sounding his trumpet, *nte-nte-nte*, Mudlayi approaches the individual and places the feather in his hair over the forehead. The man tries to pull it out, but only clutches the air on one side or the other, in front of the feather. He is quite incapable of catching hold of it. A second individual begins to show the same symptoms of intoxication (*popya*) a little way down the line. Mudlayi continues his comings and goings to the sound of his trumpet. A third and a fourth are overcome in turn. They try to get up, clutching the grass to assist them to do so, but fall to the ground, or crawl feebly about. The others keep away from them. It seems that the mondjo dries up the saliva of all who drink it, but, in the case of the truly guilty, this effect is greatly accentuated; the jaws become locked. They try to speak, but can only say *be-be-be-be* (they stammer). They are carried off, and all placed together under the tree, where they are guarded by the chief's counsellors, who will not allow their friends or relations to come near them.

"*Selekani!*" — "Get up!" is the order given to all the others, the seated crowd who have not become intoxicated. Jumping to their feet, they must run at full tilt to the lake and bathe.

Some get into difficulties on the way, they jostle each other, fall to the ground, and remain there, unable to regain their legs. Some even fall down in the water; all such are baloyi. The rest, who have successfully undergone the trial of the mondjo, come back and are restored to freedom, after having received three pinches of a special powder; one of these is thrown over the right shoulder, another over the left, and the third is swallowed, in order to counteract the defilement consequent on having imbibed this drink of the wizards, which contained in solution... the fat of a human being! As to the poor, unfortunate hypnotised folk, their affair is settled. The magic potion has revealed their criminal character. They must be made to admit their evil deeds. The counsellors interrogate them. To restore the power of speech, a particular tisane, prepared from the herb called *tjeke*, is poured into the mouth; they are shampooed (*tlhema*) on the cheeks and all over the body with its leaves. The saliva returns. They gradually revive and then begin to speak: "Yes! I devour men! I ate so and so and I still have some of his flesh in store!.. I hate so and so, and I would like to kill him, but I haven't done so yet... I bewitched the maize to hinder its growth." They are well reprimanded and told: "Cease your witchcraft and enchantments. Remove your spells from the cereals, let them grow properly, or we will kill you!"

How can the effect of the mondjo be explained? According to an old Native, the intoxication of the baloyi comes from the presence of these elements of human flesh contained in the solution. The noyi, who swallows them in drinking the philter, thus does during the day what he is accustomed to do during the night: hence the loss of his senses. As a matter of fact the man who administers the drug is clever enough to give a larger dose to those who are more or less supposed to be baloyi. Moreover there is a regular process of hypnotisation in Mudlayi's performance, and that is why some people fall into what seems to be a true cataleptic state.

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3) THE PUNISHMENT OF WITCHCRAFT.

754 What is the punishment inflicted on those convicted of the
 693 crime of witchcraft? Let us remember that this is a crime, an act of homicide, doubly punishable by the Court. Chief Shiluvane had definitely prohibited it by a decree in the following words: "I do not allow anyone to die in my country except on account of old age. So let the baloyi at once cease their enchantments, or I shall kill them all." In former times the crime of witchcraft was punished by death and the culprit was immediately hanged. (The last to be punished in this way, in the Nkuna clan, was Mudebane (I. p. 443), and Mankhelu himself executed him.) The wizards are impaled or drowned, as the case may be. Flogging and banishment were also resorted to when the crime was not so heinous. In Khosen wizards were expelled from the villages and roamed about the country, sleeping in the ruins, mocked at and insulted by the children, and oxen sinews were tied round their biceps so tightly that they entered their flesh and caused great suffering.

177.68 One of my informants (Fenis), who drank the mondjo at the death of Zihlahla, chief of the Mpfumo district, about 1870, told me that the heaviest penalty imposed on the wizards on that occasion was a fine of one or two goats, or of one pound sterling. He attributed this leniency to the proximity of the Whites. The civilised Governments in Africa have certainly done their best to put down this method of smelling-out wizards, and their efforts have been by no means without result. Native chiefs are now content with fining the wizards £ 10 or £ 15, half of which remains in their own pockets. I heard of one of them who claimed to be a Christian, but did not object to the substantial increase to his civil list brought about by witchcraft suits.

IV. *Concluding Remarks on Witchcraft.*

754 Witchcraft is one of the greatest curses of Native Life. I attribute the
 182 enormous hold which this superstition has taken on the mind of the Bantu to three causes: 1) The *Animistic beliefs* explained on p. 367

which are at the root of the idea of the double existence of the baloyi.

2) *Cannibalism*, which has perhaps never existed as a general custom in South Africa, but has been practised sporadically in times of famine, and has left a feeling of disgust and horror in the minds of later generations; this feeling is also manifested in the numerous Ogre tales.

3) The *terrible hatred* of which the Native mind is capable. If some people venture to accuse members of these tribes of such awful acts as those of killing and eating human beings, it is because they know that a Native who hates would not shrink from anything to satisfy his desire of vengeance.

We must however remember that the witchcraft superstition was universally found amongst our own forefathers, and that there were epidemics of it in the XIVth, XVth and even the XVIth centuries, hundreds of wizards having been tortured and burnt in most European countries, after having been tried before regular Courts. I have tried to establish a parallel between the ideas and practices of witchcraft in French Switzerland and those of the Thongas. The results of the comparison are very curious. I cannot give them all here, and must refer the reader to the Paris *Revue Foi et Vie*, No. of October, 1910, in which they were published. The most striking difference is this. Amongst Thongas, we are still in the *predualistic age*, viz., the opposition between a good, moral Spirit (God) and bad, wicked spirits (demons, Satan) does not yet exist in Religion. So the power of God is not invoked to reveal the wizards; or to protect the innocent against their spells. But the same animistic conceptions evidently formed the basis of European as of African witchcraft.

This superstition has a deadly effect on Native life. It is a continual source of trouble, fear, quarrels, sorrow. Strange to say, it has been on the increase in recent years. It ruins the villages. — "Formerly," say my informants, "you could see villages of ten or twenty huts. Now the accusations of witchcraft have broken them up. Each man builds his own hut apart, from fear of being bewitched, or because he is suspected of being a noyi (1)."

(1) The evil affects the Native Christian communities also, fostering hatred amongst them, and this animistic doctrine is much more difficult to overcome than ancestorlatriy, which is very quickly and completely abandoned by converts.

Some Christian Natives are so convinced that witchcraft is a reality that they interpret Matt. X. 28 by saying that "those who kill the body and who must not be feared" are the baloyi. Unhappily a Zulu translation of the Greek word *παρρησιολογία* by the word corresponding to baloyi, in Revelation XXII, v. 15, confirmed them in

- 754 The Thonga tribe really suffers from the results of the witchcraft superstition and this explains a curious magico-religious movement which took place in the years 1914-1917, in which the tribe made a serious and touching attempt to free itself from this scourge. The story of "The Murimi Movement" will be found in Appendix V.

I have already explained how I think Government can and must interfere in order to check this terrible superstition. (I. p. 445.) But its eradication will only be possible under a twofold influence, the increase of the scientific spirit, which will conquer and destroy the absurdities of the animistic magical conceptions involved in these practices, and the Christian Religion, the Religion of Love and of Light, which banishes fear and hatred.

D. DIVINATION.

- 787 Divinatory practices are extremely common amongst Thongas. Surrounded by so many evil influences, having very little or no scientific knowledge, possessing no notion of a God capable of illumining the path of their life, they try to obtain directions by the various methods of divination which they have invented, and it must be confessed that they have reached a high degree of proficiency in this domain. The anxiety to know the future lies at the foundation both of omens and divinatory practices. Let us first briefly consider the former.

I. Omens.

These are of two kinds; some objects are ill-omened, they *singita* or *hlolela*, foretell bad luck; others are favourable and announce happiness and, more especially, plenty of meat!

their idea that wizards certainly exist, since they are even mentioned in the Bible! Of course those who are further advanced see the absurdity of the witchcraft theory, but a great many do not. As a proof of this I may quote this letter addressed by a young convert to his father from Johannesburg: "If the Lord agrees with it, I shall return home in the month of February; expect me that month. I entreat you not to tell anyone, lest they bewitch me by preparing (lit. placing) snakes for me (ba ndji bakela tinyoka)."

APPENDIX V (See p. 536).

The Murimi Movement, an attempt on the part of the Thonga Tribe to get rid of witchcraft.

In the year 1913 (or 1914) the members of one of the Hlengwe clans living near the Sabie River, in the extreme north of the Thonga territory, seeing that the crops were bad, game wanting, and that even honey was scarce, contributed each of them a small sum of money, collected £ 10 and sent messengers to Myali, the Kalanga god who dwells in a cave in Machonaland, in order to regain prosperity. They were well received by the priests of Myali, who introduced them to the god they serve. They had to pass through a tunnel, with a big rock hanging over their heads. On the other side of this tunnel there was a kind of amphitheatre of rocks, enclosing a very clean and well-swept space. A voice from the rocks above greeted them in Zulu: "Good morning, my children", and they were given a pouch full of tobacco with the following instructions: "When you reach your home, take a snuff of this tobacco; then go to your gardens, blow your noses and spread the nasal mucus in the soil; henceforth you will have abundant harvests." The Hlengwe messengers returned home and began to use the precious drug, but this tobacco of Murimi, as it was called, had a marvellous fate. It found purchasers throughout the Thonga tribe, and during four years all the Thonga clans performed the new rite, the rite of Murimi, in the conviction that a new era had set in in which there would be no more famine and in which witchcraft, that great enemy of humanity, which causes disease, robs, and kills, would be expelled for ever.

Who is this Myali? He is the same personage who is called Nwali in other parts of the country, the same also as Ra-Luvimbi, the god of the Ba-Venda, to whom they pray to obtain rain (See p. 321). His sacred cave is in the Matoppo hills, in the midst of that extraordinary desert of rocks in which Cecil Rhodes chose the spot for his grave, some fifteen miles further south. Mr Elliott, who was Native Commissioner in this region, told me that the description of the cave given above was exact. I will not discuss here the origin of the cult of Myali, called also Mlimo, a term probably corresponding to the Sutho Modimo, which would seem to have been transformed into Murimi when it was adopted by the Thongas. This is a most interesting subject to which I would draw the attention of our Rhodesian colleagues. Myali has med-

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754 iums, consecrated girls (bampouka) set apart from their youth to be-
776 come the wives of his priests ; the rite of the magical tobacco, which is
771 a fecundation rite, is unknown in South African ancestrolatry. Every-
thing would appear to suggest that this cult is of foreign origin. A fact
which is worthy of special notice is this : *Myali is the enemy of wizards*.
If anyone guilty of witchcraft approaches his cave, he will be struck dead,
and his priests will have nothing to do with witchcraft cases.

I cannot explain in detail how the new cult spread from the Hlengwe country down to the Maputju region, thus creating in the Thonga tribe a unity which has but seldom been attained. Certain individuals appear to have availed themselves of the new belief to do a profitable piece of business. They bought a part of the original tobacco of Murimi, mixed it with ordinary tobacco and went to the chiefs offering to let their subjects snuff the miraculous drug. I happened to meet one of these prophets of Murimi, who also called himself Murimi and who had been arrested by the Portuguese Administrator of Morakwen, as the Authorities seem to have feared at a certain moment that the agitation caused by this movement might have a political character. This particular Murimi appeared to be a very simple type of man. He was half lame, his arms were crooked, and he told me that his reason for fighting the wizards was that it was they who had reduced him to that miserable condition ; he was convinced that his efforts to combat them were very beneficial to the country. But notwithstanding these altruistic inclinations, he did not neglect his own interests ; anyone admitted to snuff the tobacco had to give the chief a fowl or a "nkinyenta", i. e. 500 reia, then of the value of 1 s. 6d, and Murimi received a considerable share of the fee.

Wonderful rumours preceded the distributor of tobacco. It was said that he had been imprisoned by one of the Administrators, further north, but had suffered nothing through this infringement of his liberty ; the following night he had been miraculously transported to the bed of the Commandant, whilst the latter had taken his place in the gaol ! He was now approaching the town of Lourenço Marques in the form of a gigantic dragon before whom everyone fled !

754 The following is the description of the manner in which the Murimi
771 rite was performed in the Matalane region, some 15 miles north of
Lourenço Marques. The chief Magebeza summons all his subjects to assemble early in the morning in a forest (Sept. 1916). His counsellors are present and bring with them the lame prophet holding in his hands a sala shell containing the tobacco. A woman comes and, kneels down in front of him ; she holds out her open hand, palm upwards. Murimi takes

hold of one of the fingers in order that the hand may remain well open, pours a little tobacco into it and asks : "Are you a witch?" She answers : "No!" — "Then," says the prophet, "snuff!" The woman draws up all the precious tobacco into her nose, taking care not to let the least particle fall on the ground. If she carries a baby on her back, she puts a little of the powder into his nostrils, and if she is pregnant, she rubs her hypogastrium on both sides with the drug in order to "let the child who is inside snuff." Another woman comes; she answers in a hesitating manner, which does not escape the prophet; she may go so far as to say : "I do not know; perhaps I am a witch". Murimi looks at her with terrible eyes : "Take care," he says, "cast away your witchcraft immediately. If you do not do so, this goat's skin in which you are carrying your child will come to life again and belabour your breasts with its hoofs! And the day you begin to cast your spells again, you will be split in two (*handjuka hi le makari*)!" The worst case is when a woman who is a witch accepts the tobacco without confessing her evil deeds. Then, such was the rumour, the tobacco poured into her hand would suddenly increase in quantity, and upon that sign, Murimi would give her hand a blow from beneath, throwing all the tobacco over her shoulder, and the woman would fall to the ground unable to get up again and on the point of splitting in two.

When all the subjects had passed through the trial, Ndonga, one of the counsellors, addressed the throng in these words : "Now witchcraft is destroyed! You have all cast it far away. But let it not come back again. If any of you has *psipoko* (pl. of *shipoko*, p. 488) kill them, cut them in pieces with your axes or with your big knives, and let them not come back, because, if they do so, it would be a great calamity for you. They would beg you: 'Mother! give me something to eat' and if you should do so, you would die" He added: "A new era has begun. You have no longer anything to fear from wizards. If one of them approaches you to bewitch you, he will immediately split in two. Murimi has cut off the wings of the *baloyi*. They will not be able to come to do harm to you during the night. Henceforth we are free from the calamities which caused us to suffer so greatly."

This is the first part of the rite, which aims at destroying witchcraft for ever. But it has also a second aim, the bringing in of a new prosperity, a golden age in which everyone will have plenty to eat, in which even, according to some, death will no longer exist. The second part of the rite is connected with this great hope.

Whilst Murimi proceeded with the examination of the people, another

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754 counsellor, Phayindi, was preparing "the leaves"; these are the large
 771 bracts protecting mealie-cobs which he has torn from the stem and
 in the centre of which he has placed a little of the tobacco. These
 are now lying on the ground, and each woman must go to fetch
 one and return home with her husband. Keeping silent all the
 while, she takes a little pot full of water, pours a little of the drug
 into it and carries it to the threshold of the hut, where both
 husband and wife wash their hands and feet. She must not enter the
 hut herself; the husband enters, and carefully places the pot in the
 back part of the hut. The woman then sets out for her gardens,
 carrying the leaf. She follows the boundaries of each field, digging in
 the ground here and there, throws into the hole a little mucus from her
 nose, which is still full of the tobacco, and covers it with earth. She
 keeps to the end the largest field, in which there may be a *nkuhlu* tree
 (p. 18), the *matureira* tree which is apparently preferred by Murimi.
 She digs a little hole at the foot of this tree and buries the leaf in it, in
 such a way that only the middle of the leaf which contains the tobacco
 will be covered with earth; both ends will remain visible. Thus the
 fields are "fattened (*nonisa*)" for ever. But if the mistress of the field
 should again begin to practise witchcraft, the leaf will come out of the
 soil and fly up to the chief's village, where the guilty woman will have to
 redeem it by paying a fine of £ 1.. Having finished performing the
 fecundation rite, the woman claps her hands and says: "Murimi! I ask
 thee to help me here in my gardens in order that I may have a plentiful
 harvest and become fat!". She then returns home, and leans her hoe
 against the sacred tree of the village. Her husband, who has waited
 for her, again washes her feet with the lustral water and the injunction
 of silence is removed.

These are the rites of the first day. But now begins a sacred period
 which lasts from ten to fifteen days, and is marked by three strong
 taboos. The labour taboo; no work is allowed in the fields until agri-
 cultural occupations are resumed by the collective tilling of the chief's
 field. The sexual taboo; at the end of the period the great wife will
 smear her hut with clay and have relations with her husband the follow-
 ing night; next day the other women will do the same, but woe to the
 one who should precede the great wife (I p. 324). The travelling
 taboo; travelling is forbidden during these days and everyone must
 stay at home till the chief has cancelled the prohibition by himself under-
 taking a journey.

This is still not the end. Those who have snuffed the tobacco of

Murimi constitute in some sort a new humanity; they have been *initiated* into a new life; they must abstain from relations with those who do not belong to their society, and observe peculiar rules which will distinguish them from the uninitiated. If a man has not snuffed whilst his wife has done so, she must not allow him to have conjugal relations with her; if he was away from the country when Murimi passed, the husband must go to the capital and snuff there, a little of the tobacco having been preserved for those who were absent. He will be subject to the law of silence until he has ritually washed his hands and feet. (This is a form of the kunga rite as observed in the initiation ceremonies. (See I, p. 124.) If strangers pass through the village, no food will be offered to them unless they have snuffed, at any rate no food coming from the fields which have been "treated (daha)" with the drug. The following are some of the taboos regulating the life of the initiated. Language taboos: the word *fole*, which means tobacco, must only be used to designate the tobacco of Murimi; ordinary tobacco must be called by a new word, *shilandi*. The word *mpfula*, rain, is prohibited and must be replaced by *magayisa*, (which means a party of boys going to work). Alimentary taboos: no special food is prohibited, but certain articles of diet must be eaten according to new rules. This is particularly the case for the fruit of the nsala tree (p. 16). The shell must be broken in such a way that it forms two halves; the eater must lie on his belly, place the upper half of the shell on the soil, suck out the pulp round the stones to his heart's content and put all the stones back into the first half of the shell; when he has finished, he must place the second half over the first and deposit the fruit thus reconstituted at the foot of the tree, saying: "Murimi!" in order to show his gratefulness to his new god. If there are many ripe sala fruits on the stem, one must be left for Murimi. When digging sweet potatoes, sticks must be used rather than the hoe for the first ten days, during which tilling the ground with hoes is taboo; later on the hoe may be used, but one potato must be left in the earth as the share of Murimi. There are a number of other less important taboos to be observed; the stem of the cuscuta must not be employed to tie the bundle of dead wood gathered in the bush for fuel, because the cuscuta is the mat of Murimi. Certain kinds of snakes, the big Varan lizard, the tortoise and the small turtledove called shivambalane must not be killed. Should a hunter kill a shivambalane by mistake, he must place it on the branch of a tree, saying: "Murimi!". Above all, the initiated, the members of the new humanity, delivered from the fears of witchcraft by the all-powerful Murimi, must invoke him upon every

754 occasion. At the conclusion of their speeches they pronounce his name.
771 Though no special offering is made except the sweet potato and the sala fruit just referred to, and no special ceremony of worship is performed, Murimi has clearly become the object of adoration of his devotees and is much nearer their hearts and consciences than the ancestor-gods.

A year or two went by and the Thongas were obliged to confess that the produce of the fields in the meagre sand of their hills was not richer than in former years. People died just as before; the great salvation which the worshippers of Murimi had expected did not come, and the tribe understood vaguely that it had been the victim of a gigantic hoax. At least when the question was put to the devotees of the new cult: "What about Murimi?" they smiled and did not answer a word, and very soon Murimi was forgotten.

754 It might be thought that this strange movement was the result of Euro-
771 pean influence; it bears a strongly monotheistic character, and Murimi is certainly very different from the ancestor-gods and from Tilo, Heaven, and much more akin to the Christian God. It must however be observed
776 that very little information was given about this god, who was to a certain extent identified with his prophets, the latter being named Murimi as well as himself. But setting aside the small part played by Murimi, we are forced to recognise that the new rite is essentially and authentically Bantu. It is directly connected with witchcraft, the old Thonga animistic belief; we have already met, in connection with the treatment of smallpox, with the idea of destroying witchcraft by means of a collective confession and repudiation (p. 465). The taboos accompanying the new rite are those we have everywhere found in the marginal periods or when an initiation was taking place. The Murimi Movement is thus a genuine creation of primitive Thonga mentality. Changes are taking place so rapidly that it is probably the last. I am glad therefore to have had an opportunity of witnessing it and of publishing the record of such an interesting event. Further details will be found in a paper which appeared in *Le Journal de Psychologie normale et pathologique*. 15 Décembre 1924. Paris.